

PATRICK DUNBAR





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PATRICK DUNBAR

OR

*What came of a "Personal
in the Times"*

A NOVEL

BY

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PATRICK DUNBAR

CHAPTER I.

Mahomet, on his way to the seventh heaven to commune with Allah, speaks of having met about midway in the ascent, say about the fourth or fifth heaven, an angel with seventy thousand heads, each head having seventy thousand mouths, each mouth seventy thousand tongues, each tongue speaking seventy thousand different languages; and *all* praising Allah.

Now, barring any allusion to its habitat, or to its being an angel, or to its being in the habit of ever *praising* anybody, what in the world tallies with this description so well as a modern newspaper? God only knows how many *heads* a newspaper has, it is true; as any one will say who has ever tried to find a responsible one, either to sue or to break for an indiscretion of any kind. As to its mouths or its tongues, or its ability to speak all the languages in existence, to say nothing of the dead ones, Mahomet's description, if anything, falls short of, rather than exceeds the truth, as applied to a newspaper.

Patrick Dunbar was seated in the coffee room of an old fashioned London hotel on the evening of the 24th of December, 1875, ministering to three of the principal requirements of modern life, at one and the same time, to wit: he was smoking a cigar, imbibing at intervals a drop of Scotch and water and he was carelessly casting his eye over a copy of *The Times* newspaper. Suddenly his gaze became intently fixed upon the paper, as he read the following, under the heading of "Personal:"

Descendants or relatives of Patrick Dunbar, formerly of Cork, Ireland, who is supposed to have emigrated to America, in or about the year 1825, will hear something to their possible advantage by communicating with Messrs. Griggs & Dobson, Solicitors, 56 Theobald's Road, London, W. C.

Now, as it happened, the Patrick Dunbar with whom we have to deal was a descendant of William Dunbar, who once had a brother Patrick, who may, or may not, have ever lived in Cork, or who may, or may not, have emigrated to America. For the rest, our young friend Dunbar—for he was young, twenty-five or thereabouts—had lost his father and had been turned out into the world early in life with a mother and two sisters to care for, who, however, had between them a small income of several hundred pounds a year.

Dunbar had up to this time so far succeeded in pushing his way in the path he had laid out for himself, or which, more properly speaking, destiny had laid out for him, as, at the time our story opens, to have risen to the dignity of a stock broker's clerk in the City, with an emolument of some two hundred pounds a year. So, taking the things of this world as they go, the Dunbars were comfortably enough off to require no assistance or commiseration from us, or any one else. They lived at Putney, fairly well out in the country, in a small villa, standing in its own grounds; of which the ladies of the family were extremely proud, and which they kept in apple-pie order.

At the City end of the line Dunbar was to be found in the vicinity of Billiter Square in a modern, well-appointed building, as London offices go. His employers were Messrs. Strongwell & Co., stock brokers, promoters and general agents in the American trade. They also did a bit of discounting, apparently had means; and their Bankers, the London and Provincial Bank, were always ready to make

answer to inquiries: "Highly respectable people. Have been with us for many years. Good for all engagements." They also had an account with the Bank of England.

So far, so good; and now to explain how young Dunbar happened to be in the coffee-room of a hotel, on Christmas eve, rather than in the bosom of his family, as he should have been. Dunbar was ambitious. He had seen enough of the world to recognize the power the possession of wealth bestows upon a man. He was clever, industrious, even hard-headed, for a man of his years; and he was beginning to rebel against the trammels of service. He wished above all things to be independent; to strike out for himself. Now, of all places in the world, London is the most difficult to strike out in successfully. It's the principle of not going near the water until you know how to swim, over again. No body in London knows you are alive until your name has been in the Directory at least five years; but, if you've starved to death long before the five years come round, what earthly good does it do to have it there? Then again, to do business in a rich town like London, one must have capital; and unless he has earned it in business how could he get it, and how can he have done business, when it took at least five years to find out that he was alive, and, in the meantime he has starved? And so on, *ad captandum, et ad infinitum!*

It is an incontrovertible fact, however, that people *do* get on in London. How they ever do it, God only knows; but they do. The five years that it requires to get a knowledge of your existence into the heads of any people whom it would do you the least good in the world to have it get into, come round at last, and, somehow, the fifth and last year generally finds one in a fair state of health, all things considered; and then you go on and on and become in time respectable, rich, great, and all the rest of it; as Dick Whittington and many others have done.

Now it had got into young Dunbar's head that, possibly, he might save a part of *his* five years hibernation by beginning to form acquaintances and connections which would be valuable to him later in life, while still acting as clerk for Messrs. Strongwell & Co. But, as he was a perfectly right-minded young man, he recognized the fact that in business hours his time belonged to the firm who were paying for it, and not to himself. After four o'clock, when the office closed on week-days, and one o'clock on Saturdays, his time was his own, and instead of using it by returning home he had elected to devote it to meeting certain men of his acquaintance in the coffee-room of the hotel where we first discovered him a few pages back. Here they discussed business, or possible business, and consumed a moderate amount of whisky and tobacco at one and the same time. As Dunbar was no longer a boy, and as he was, both by nature and education, abstemious and refined, there was nothing to be feared from either the whisky or the company in which it was absorbed. He had passed at Harrow and at Oxford the period in a young man's life when, if dissipation of any kind was to take hold upon him, it had already done so.

So, on the evening alluded to, Dunbar had, partly from the force of habit, and partly on the off chance of meeting some one of his friends, stopped at the Craven Hotel on his way west, and all unconsciously, and unexpectedly to himself, got put into this book by the accident of his eye having fallen upon the advertisement in the copy of *The Times*, aforesaid. So, there is the explanation of the matter; or, as the French would say, *voilà tout!*

The more he thought the matter over, and the oftener he read the notice, the more firmly the young man became convinced that in some mysterious way the incident was to mark a very decided turn in his life. To show how well this assumption was grounded now becomes not only

a duty, but a pleasure, on the part of the faithful historian of the Life and Adventures of Patrick Dunbar.

Deeply absorbed in his own thoughts, the hero of this story failed to observe that the door of the coffee-room now opened to admit a young man of about his own age, well appointed in every way, and with the springy but firm tread that only a long practice of out door sports imparts to the well-bred Englishman. He was a handsome, broad-shouldered, well-knit young fellow, with a clean shaven face, and with an expression on it, which, if genuine, denoted honesty, intelligence and simplicity, combined in about equal proportions.

"Hello, Dunbar," he said, cheerily, taking a seat, and ringing the bell for the purpose of ordering some liquid refreshment. "What's up? You seem to take as much interest in your paper as if it contained an obituary notice of an aunt who had just left you a fortune. I say, old man, if it's anything good, don't forget that we are partners, for you know the present state of my finances, and Christmas bills are coming in so fast that I am a jolly sight more comfortable in the coffee-room of this hotel than I am at my lodgings, just at present."

"How did you happen to think of an obituary notice, Gow?" asked Dunbar, laying down his paper, and relighting his cigar. "Curiously enough, you've come pretty nigh hitting the nail on the head. Listen to this: The heirs of Patrick Dunbar, whom I have every reason to suppose was an uncle of mine, are advertised for. Do you happen to know anything of a firm of solicitors in Gray's Inn, Griggs and Dobson?"

"Rather; they're my solicitors."

"The devil they are. Pretty respectable kind of people?"

"So so."

"Tell me about them, will you?"

"Well, as the term goes, they're respectable enough. They've been in that damned dull old office of theirs, in Theobald's Road, just overlooking Gray's Inn Yard, for God knows how long; *I* certainly don't. They've got money, or their clients have, for they are always looking about for a chance to pick up a good thing. They do a lot in reversions, post obits, occasionally, and a devilish big business in bills of rather the dicky kind. They've got my name at this very time on a biggish lot of paper, both as drawer and acceptor; much bigger, in fact, than I wish it were."

"You should keep your name off bills, Gow, as I've often told you. It will get you into serious trouble some of these days if you don't."

"All very well for you to talk, old man, but look at the difference in our positions. You and your people have a certain fixed income, small, we'll say, but sure. You're a rising young man in a good City firm, with everything in your favor for a partnership some of these days, I dare say. Your wants are small and you've been brought up, well, no offence, of course, in a moderate kind of a way, so that its no trouble for you to live within your income."

"While you?"

"While I've been damnedly badly brought up, I'm perfectly free to confess. My father always led me to suppose that I should be well provided for after his death, and, poor old dad, he had every reason to. But fate settled the matter differently. It's a long story and I won't tell it now; but, instead of being well-to-do in the world, I was left in the most unfortunate fix possible. With all the habits and tastes of a rich man, I'm a poor one; and, if there's anything worse than *that*, why I, for one, don't happen to know what it is."

"Yes, old man, it is an unfortunate state of affairs, but then you have much upon your side, after all. You've lots of friends, a fairish allowance from your father's estate, good credit at your Bankers, and a devilish sound head on your shoulders to judge of a good bargain when you see one. So, take it for all and all, you're not so very much to be pitied, as far as I can see."

"Very well, Pat, have it your own way. There's no one in the world so badly off, I suppose, but that he might be worse; but, jack that up for the time being, and let's look into this matter of *yours*. It sounds interesting. I haven't the least doubt in the world that we could raise a few hundreds, possibly a few thousands, from Griggs and Dobson on your prospects. That would go a long way towards helping me over Christmas, and leave something for us to put into the business besides."

"Upon my word, Gow, you are a cool hand to count *my* chickens before they're hatched," said Dunbar, laughing and picking up the paper to put it in his friend's hands. "There's the notice, read it for yourself."

"Um," said Gow, after having carefully read the advertisement. "Seems pretty clear, I should say. You are certainly Patrick Dunbar. You know whether you ever had an uncle or grandfather of the same name, and whether he lived at Cork, and went from there to the States. Even if you're not prepared to prove every step in the line of succession, the presumptive evidence of your being the man they are looking for is so strong that, unless some one else turns up with a stronger claim than yours, which appears unlikely, you certainly ought to be able to establish your title."

"I fear it will not be quite as clear sailing as you appear to think it," said Dunbar, contemplatively. "You see, a lot of time has elapsed; fifty years. In a half a century many changes have occurred, many records have vanished

entirely, or have been mislaid. I remember to have heard my father say on several occasions that his family had at some time lived in Ireland. Just in what part, I don't know. You see, I suppose he was either a little ashamed of his Irish connections or he saw no good in bringing them to the fore. I remember, however, his having spoken of a brother Patrick. All the rest of my knowledge in the matter is rather hazy. Not the kind of evidence, I fear, upon which such knowing old cards as you picture Messieurs Griggs and Dobson to be would advance much money, if indeed, there is an estate coming either to me or some namesake of mine."

"I'm not at all so sure of *that*, old man. These old style solicitors make money by *handling* money. It's as plain as the nose on your face that, they being the custodians of the estate, couldn't speculate with it; while, it is equally clear, that if it were in the hands of its proper owner, we'll say *yours*, for the sake of argument, they both could and would, in all probability, have the management of it, and thus be in a position where they could pull in many a fat fee or commission from it. See?"

"Yes, that seems reasonable enough. But how am I to prove my claim? What have I to go by? Of course, my mother may be able to throw some light upon the matter, but I fear not much. Now, old chap, put yourself in my place and advise me what to do; how to open negotiations with Griggs and Dobson, to begin with. Of course, I shall ask you for a letter of introduction to them, which will help amazingly, as through it they will know with whom they have to deal. What is my next step?"

Gow was silent a few minutes, as if engaged in thinking the matter carefully over.

"Of course," he said, finally, "it would be well for you to go to these foxy old lawyers armed with as much information as possible, in the first instance. Aren't there

any records, for instance, in Cork which it would be well for you to look up?"

"What records, will you be good enough to tell me, are likely to exist of the fact of a poor young man having emigrated to America from Ireland fifty years ago? Why, man, millions have emigrated since then, and how many of these millions, think you, have left any trace or record whatever of their former lives, either before they left the old country or after they had arrived in the new? I might much better go to America, and begin my inquiries *there*, it appears to me, rather than in Ireland; but even that is a wild goose chase."

"It occurs to me, Pat, that something might be done by shifting the burden of proof from your shoulders on to those of Griggs and Dobson. Why not go to these men assuming the position that you are the man they are looking for, which you can do with a good conscience, as you certainly believe yourself to be the man, and put them to the proof that you are *not*. In the absence of any one to contest your title, and with the undoubted respectability of your connection, it seems to me your claim would be a very strong one and one very difficult to disprove. It's worth trying at any rate, and possibly Griggs and Co. may put you in the way of obtaining some information which, putting it together with what you already have, would be of great assistance to you."

"Not at all a bad idea, old man, and I'll follow your suggestion. First of all, I'll get all the facts I can from my mother; then I'll ask you for your letter, and then I'll beard these lions in their den and see what they have to say for themselves. So, sit down and write me a line to these people, or send me one from your lodgings so I may have it within, say a week. We'll give Griggs & Co. a few days to get over their Christmas in, and then I'll go and look them up."

"And, instead of giving you a letter, Dunbar, I'll go with you myself. I'm sure I can say many things *viva voce* which I could *not* say in a letter. So, name your date for the visit, and I'll meet you, and we'll go together."

"Thanks, Gow; I think myself that is the better way. Say next Thursday, at eleven o'clock. I will ask my people in the City for an hour or two's leave of absence and we'll see what there is in this matter."

The two young men then lapsed into a general discussion of their affairs and soon separated, each going in the direction of their respective homes. Dunbar took the underground at Charing Cross Station for Putney; Gow leisurely sauntered up Cockspur Street and the Haymarket to Piccadilly, apparently deeply lost in thought. The fog of a winter's night in London was thickening up as it is likely to do when some six million of people are preparing their evening meals. Gow passed Piccadilly Circus with its blaze of light struggling through the fog, its bustle and confusion, its painted women, its hurrying crowds of Christmas shoppers, its jumble of busses and cabs, its well trained policemen doing their very best to regulate the traffic, and succeeding about as well as could be expected under the circumstances. His road lay through Piccadilly to Dover Street, where he had his lodgings. Suddenly a thought seemed to strike him. He stopped, and looking at his watch by the aid of an electric light, he said half audibly: "Six-thirty. Post Office, Waterloo Place, open till seven. Just time enough to send a wire."

He turned sharply in his tracks, and setting his face in the direction from which he had just come, soon found himself in the Branch Post Office in Waterloo Place. Half an hour afterwards a message was delivered at Chiselhurst, to one Samuel Dobson, Solicitor, of Gray's Inn, which ran as follows:

"Very important for me to see you at once. Wire me my lodgings, Dover street, when and where."
S. Gow.

This done, the young man resumed his walk to his home, where, presumably, he found his dinner waiting for him.

Dunbar arrived at Putney Bridge in due time, and, finding the fog rather thick, took a cab to his home, where he found his mother and sisters expecting his arrival, and *his* dinner waiting. After the discussion of the meal by the family, he had a smoke; and then, managing to get his mother by herself, asked: "Mother, what can you tell me about my father's relatives. Wasn't there an uncle Patrick who lived in Cork, or somewhere in Ireland, and who went to America many years ago?"

"I have always supposed so, my son. Why do you ask?"

Dunbar had purchased a copy of *The Times* at the book stall of the underground, and now, pointing to the notice, requested his mother to read it. When she had done so, he asked her what she thought of it.

"Well Padsey, if you really want to know, I don't think the notice applies to us."

"Will you tell me why?"

"Well, in the first place, it's too good to be true. No such luck as an inheritance has ever befallen our family. Then, the Dunbars, although always highly respectable, have never been more than fairly well off. Your poor father enjoyed a comfortable income for the greater part of his life and was able to bring his children up as ladies and gentlemen; but, at his death, to leave his family only fairly well provided for. If he had expectations of any kind I feel sure he would have spoken to me of them, as one of his chief sorrows was the slender provision he was able to make for us. He never took into consideration the fact that he had spent a very large part of the means he might have left his family in the education of yourself

and your sisters. Now, as to his relatives, he rarely spoke of them. I am inclined to think that when they lived in Ireland they were rather poor. Also, I have an impression that his brother Patrick was something of a *mauvais sujet*. At any rate, what became of him, I really never knew; and I feel quite sure your father did not."

"You don't know where they lived in Ireland?"

"No, not absolutely; but my impression is it was near Cork."

"Well, mother, as far as our information goes, I must say it tallies pretty well with the particulars given of Patrick Dunbar in this notice. 'Lived at Cork. Supposed to have emigrated to America in or about the year 1825.'"

"Yes, my son, but that is very little to go on in claiming an estate, isn't it?"

"Yes, but I hope to get more."

"Padsey, my dear boy, we have enough to live upon. You are doing well and are in a fair way to do better. In order to prove your claim to an inheritance, with the very slender knowledge you have of your father's relations, it seems to me a very large sum would have to be spent in lawyers' fees and in investigating this matter, generally. Wouldn't it be wiser to let well enough alone?"

"Mother, something tells me this notice refers to us, and that it would be a fatal error on our part to allow it to pass unnoticed. In fact, I have already gone so far as to make an appointment to call upon the solicitors whose names appear at the bottom of the advertisement, and I can't very well break it, even if I were so disposed, which I am frank enough to say I am not."

"Well, my boy, you are the head of the family, and I won't stand in the way of your doing as you see fit in the matter. But don't, I beseech you, do anything to involve us in litigation or in expense of any kind, for I feel sure you will regret it."

"I will bear what you say in mind, mother, you may rest assured of that; both on your account and my own."

The young women now began to show signs of interest in the rather extended conversation between Patrick and his mother, and, as in the present status of affairs it was as well to excite no more hopes, possibly, probably, doomed to disappointment, than was necessary, the conversation was changed. That evening, however, after the rest of the family had retired for the night, young Dunbar took from his secretary a bundle of old papers which had belonged to his father during his lifetime and began a thorough examination of them. At first there was little to reward his search, but finally he came upon some letters bearing date of about 1845 to 1850 in which he noticed the name of his uncle mentioned at rare intervals, but then only casually, and in a manner to throw but little light upon the subject he had set his mind to investigate.

He was about to give over the search for the present, when his eye fell upon the signature of Patrick Dunbar at the end of a letter. As in all the letters and papers so far Patrick Dunbar had been referred to in the third person, the change to the first attracted his attention. It proved to be a letter dated New York, 1842. It was yellow and musty with age and seemed to have been left carelessly in a bundle of apparently unimportant letters to be forgotten. It ran as follows:

DEAR BROTHER WILLIAM:—

Luck has been against me again, and I've been compelled to draw upon you for £100. Of course you'll remind me of my promise never to draw upon you again; that, and to let the liquor alone. I've done the best I could, but somehow I can't help myself. I can't refuse to play when asked by certain people here without losing caste; and, as they all drink, I drink too. The only difference seems to be that *I* get drunk and lose both my head and my money, while they keep both. Of course you can

refuse to honor this draft; but, as I've had the money on it, if it comes back dishonored I shall be placed in a very unfortunate position. They have a disagreeable way of *hanging* people here who don't pay their debts. In any case I should be compelled to leave town, and just as luck seems to be coming my way. Through Murphy, whom I've told you about, I've been let into some good speculations in land in this rapidly growing town. Of course, with my damnable luck I may never realize a dollar; but then my luck may turn. In order to secure you for all the moneys you have already advanced me, and this last hundred pounds, which I feel sure you will not refuse, I have made a will, which you will find on the page annexed to this letter, making you my sole legatee, in fact, my sole heir; as at present I have no near relatives but you. This will, though brief and somewhat informal, being drawn by myself, has been passed upon by a lawyer here, by name Donahue, who says it will hold water under the American laws. As I have nothing but debts to leave you at present, this document may appear to you as worth just about the paper it is written upon. But this is the country and the period for long chances, and who knows but that I may turn out a millionaire in the end?

Your affectionate brother,

PATRICK DUNBAR.

Upon the back of this letter, as stated, was a will, in the same handwriting as the body of the letter, short and to the point, and informally drawn, as might be expected to be the case, when a man not a lawyer, was making his will, leaving "unto his dearly beloved brother William, of —near Cork, Ireland, each and every property of which he was seized or possessed, in consideration of moneys advanced to him at various times, his love and affection for said William Dunbar, and as some atonement for the trouble and anxiety he had caused the said William Dunbar by reason of his wild and intemperate life." The document was apparently in perfect order, and properly attested, as far as Dunbar could judge of such a matter.

CHAPTER II.

Just as Gow was leaving his lodgings in Dover Street on Christmas morning, a telegraphic message was handed him which read as follows:

“Tuesday, my office, eleven o’clock.”

Dobson.

Christmas was not an agreeable day to Gow, this year. Besides the very marked contrasts it offered to former Christmases, which had been spent at his father’s home in the country amidst scenes of great festivity and rejoicing, he had come to an epoch in his financial affairs which gave him the greatest possible uneasiness. It is one thing to exceed one’s income; but that is a matter of adjustment. You overspend one year; you underspend the next, and the equilibrium is restored. But, with Gow, it was a different matter altogether: He had not only overspent his income to a degree far past any possible readjustment, but he had involved himself, by dabbling in bills, to an extent which meant absolute ruin, unless the unexpected happened; and relief came from the most unexpected quarter. Dunbar had alluded to the fact of his, Gow’s, credit being good at his Bankers. Gow, as the result of a good introduction, had managed to make a very good impression upon the manager of one of the west end branches of the London and Western Bank. Mr. Brown, the manager, lately promoted and anxious for business, had found in Gow an active and energetic ally in bring-

ing in accounts of well-to-do young men, like himself, who could always be relied upon to keep at least a thousand or two to their credit, and not to demand much accommodation. Unlike these young men, however, Gow *did* demand accommodation; and, demanding it from the standpoint of a first-class introduction, which, in fact, almost amounted to a guaranty, and, as a return for the large business he had brought, he was particularly hard to refuse. Brown, a young man himself, with his way to make in the world, had gone on discounting bills for Gow, until, becoming somewhat uneasy at their increasing volume, and a certain similarity and other earmarks about them which to a Banker smelt of kite-flying, had finally tried to call a halt. This fact, together with his ever increasing demands for money, occasioned not only by his extravagant living, but by the heavy interest charges he had to pay to keep his kites well in the air, had induced Gow to seek other discounting facilities. Everyone at all conversant with financial matters in London knows that the moment a man begins to offer his paper outside of his own Bankers, the rate jumps with leaps and bounds into the forties, fifties, or sixties per cent., the nearer he approaches that last resource of the spendthrift and kiteflyer, the Jews. Gow had not quite reached this last stage yet; although the swiftness of his downward passage in that direction ought to have been a source of congratulation to the Jews. He had tried all the expedients known to the financial kiteflyer to keep his head above water. First, he had employed intermediaries to take his bills to other banks to be discounted in *their* names. This answered for a time, but each and every man who had accommodated him in this way soon came to him with similar requests on their own accounts. A lot of such bills, endorsed by himself, of which, however, he did not enjoy the proceeds, he had induced Brown to put to his credit. Brown, thinking him-

self safe in his reliance upon these new names, had done this to accommodate Gow, without reflecting that in this way he was really allowing this persistent young man to increase his obligation to the Bank. Brown, being young at the business, had probably not come to a realization of the fact that neither the newness of a name, nor the number of new names had very much to do with the ultimate payment of a bill. In the event of anything happening to any one of the members of a kiting syndicate, the whole batch generally go down together. In this particular instance, he was even worse off than before, by reason of the new names, in that Gow having discounted these bills in return for the accommodation he had had from his friends, did not get the proceeds, and, consequently, could not apply them in liquidation of his own indebtedness to the Bank.

By some chance, one of his bills had been offered to Griggs and Dobson. These gentlemen, knowing, or thinking they knew, of Gow's affairs, having for years been his father's solicitors, pricked up their ears at this.

"The young fool," Dobson had said to his partner, "can't have come to the end of his rope yet; and, by a little care and good management we can pick up a dollar or two before the end comes."

"All right, go ahead," was the laconic reply of Griggs, who was *not* a financier in the sense of knowing how to pick up money in the streets of London, as Dobson did; but who loved a sovereign, and was just as keen in his search for them as his partner, only he went at it in a different way. The result of this first transaction was that Gow soon found a demand for his bills springing up from an unknown source; unknown, because the intermediary who had opened the door for his discounting facilities at his own solicitors had not considered it his duty to inform him of the fact. Soon, however, the knowl-

edge came to him, as a result of an inquiry on the part of Griggs and Dobson's Bankers, and he took in the importance of the information, as viewed from the standpoint of his future financial career.

One of Gow's strong points, as a business man, was his apparent calmness and indifference; excellent things in a financier. He now assumed a stolid nonchalance, which he was far from feeling. When the outside broker who had tapped the money chest of Griggs and Dobson came to him for a fresh supply of bills, he pleaded a surplus of ready cash which precluded the possibility of his paying a high rate of interest for money: "He would oblige the broker's client, whoever it might be, with some bills; but it must be at a fairly low rate of discount."

This attitude of Gow's was duly reported to Dobson, and had its intended effect upon that astute financial gentleman. "Ah ha," he said to himself, "the young man doesn't need money; he only dabbles in bills to keep his name on the market in case of need. The young beggar must be better off than I thought him. Then, his Bankers speak well of him. Perhaps I've done him an injustice, and he's a better risk than I took him to be."

At any rate, Dobson took the bills at a lower rate than he had paid for the last lot, and asked for more. Gow was wise enough to in no way interfere with his broker's principals. Of course, he could have gone to Dobson now himself, and saved the commission he was paying his broker; but in doing so he would have exposed his weakness. No, he went on coolly and calmly signing bills, discounting them through his new channel, paying the money arising from these discounts into his Bank, keeping away from Brown, and promptly paying his acceptances as they came due; until *Brown* began to open his eyes.

"Gow's a better man than I thought him, evidently," he said to himself, after this had gone on for some time.

"Perhaps I've been rather hard upon him—I notice he never comes to the Bank now. I wonder if he's taking his friends elsewhere. I must look into this matter."

So he sent for Gow. The latter took his time in answering the invitation, but at last dropped into the Bank.

"What's up, Gow?" demanded Brown, after an exchange of the ordinary courtesies, "you never come to the Bank nowadays. Are you taking your friends somewhere else?"

"No, Brown, I'm simply taking matters quietly, that's all. No good in a fellow making a cart-horse of himself if he doesn't have to, is there?"

"No, I suppose not. But you're not asking for any discounts lately, and your balance is running up, and you never come near us. You're not offended with us, are you?"

"No, Brown, not exactly; but you know you *were* rather nasty with me some little time back when I needed money, and now that I *don't* need it, well, I can afford to take matters quietly. Some of these days, if in the meantime I don't find bankers who appreciate me more than you do, we may be able to do some more business together; but not now. Good day."

And he took his hat and leisurely sauntered out of the Bank. Brown watched him coolly walking away with all the emotions incident to a sense of possible injustice to a client, together with an absolute feeling of disappointment at the loss of a paying customer.

Gow allowed matters to go along as they were going until he had filled up Messrs. Griggs and Dobson with about as many of his bills as he thought they could conveniently hold, and then relented towards Brown, by permitting him to have some, at the expense of Dobson, until the latter's appetite returned; and so on, with a see-saw arrangement which worked admirably for a time, but

which, like all other mundane things, came to an end at last. Both the Bank and Dobson had come to be seriously alarmed at Gow's financial position, and it was but little consolation when, after comparing notes with each other, they found out the trick that had been played upon them by the fresh and innocent looking Gow.

It was under the pressure incident to such a state of his affairs that Gow had welcomed anything that looked to him like a straw to be clutched at in the financial sea in which he was just then trying to prevent himself from sinking. Gow and Dunbar had discussed the matter of forming a firm at some not far distant day, in the event of Dunbar's not being admitted to partnership in the firm in which he was now serving as a clerk. Dunbar, although in many ways a good man of business, had that peculiarly English quality of taking a man a good deal at his estimate of himself. He had been a schoolmate of Gow's at Harrow, and had subsequently met him at Oxford, although not in his own college. He had always liked the man, and went on liking him, probably from the force of habit, as very many of us do. Having never had relations with his friend in times of difficulty or danger, and being by nature an unsuspecting person, it had never occurred to him how easily misfortune may undermine a character otherwise frank and open, as he had always found Gow's to be. In a vague way it had come to Dunbar of late that all was not well with his friend's financial affairs. In fact, Gow, with his usual frankness, had told him so. But very frequently we become so accustomed to frankness as to discount it. This had been the case in the present instance. Dunbar had become so used to having his friend speak rather carelessly of the serious condition of his affairs, that, nothing ever having come of it, he paid no attention.

There had been a certain design in this, as far as Gow

was concerned, however, as there was in everything that young man did or left undone. One of Gow's financial axioms was that there was nothing to be gained by asking a favor of a man whom you knew to be absolutely unable to grant it. In doing so, you came no nearer to the object you had in view, and you exposed your weakness to a man who both could and would, in all probability, be better able to serve you if he felt you were strong, than if he knew you to be weak. With Gow, each and every friend he had was a pawn to be used for just what he was worth in the game he was playing, and *not* to be used until he was worth it. The time had come now, or he thought it had, for Dunbar to be used; and his only care was to play his pawn in the most effective manner.

On the appointed day, he walked into Dobson's office, a few minutes late, designedly, as usual, with a view to not suggesting to the sharp old lawyer that he had a favor to ask. Dobson was seated in his old-fashioned office overlooking the black brick buildings of Gray's Inn Yard, with the typical surroundings of the London solicitor. There was the respectful managing clerk to take your card in to the sanctum of his employer's private office, the careful inspection of the visitor, half suspicious, half inquisitive, but wholly deferential, to all outward appearing. Once in the private office, there was the same old musty smell of parchment and the general deadness which had been creeping into the place for perhaps a hundred years. The same rack of black tin boxes marked in white letters with the names of men long since dead, or slowly dying, by reason of the law's delay. Mr. Dobson, a large man, not altogether pleasant to look upon, was seated at his desk, and evidently in not the best of humors.

"I say, young man," he said, sharply, as soon as Gow had entered the room, and consulting his watch, "you have been keeping me waiting thirteen minutes, which,

together with the fact that you have brought me up to town during Christmas week, which I had expected to spend in the country, can only be justified by some very important affair. Now, what is it?"

Gow looked the picture of calm indifference. Contemptuous indifference, perhaps, would describe it better. There is sometimes a strength in weakness and irresponsibility quite as baffling as the other kind. In the present instance Gow felt this kind of power in the very weakness of his financial position; and, as usual with him, was prepared to take advantage of it.

"Dobson," he answered, after waiting a minute to impress upon the big fellow sitting opposite him how utterly impossible it was for him to assume any airs of superiority with him, "Dobson, how much paper of mine do you hold?"

"I couldn't tell to a thousand pounds, without looking at our books. What's up? Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"I don't feel quite so sure of that, Dobson. I shall certainly be compelled to ask for a renewal of pretty much all of my bills, unless some arrangement can be had. You see, you've injured my credit at my Bankers by your damned stupidity in calling upon them as you did. It would serve you right if you had to pay through the nose for it."

"For God's sake don't talk like that, Gow," said the big man, evidently much alarmed. "My partner has absolutely refused to allow me to renew another bill for you. You see, I went into this business a good deal upon my own judgment, although I had his formal consent. From a small amount, it has crept up to a very large one; much larger than I ever intended, and, I'm sorry to say, much larger than Griggs thinks it to be. Now, there mustn't be any trouble over these bills, or I am a ruined man. There really mustn't."

"It didn't occur to you, I suppose, that you were running a great risk of ruining *me* when you called upon my Bankers?"

"Well, no. You see, you played a trick upon us in putting one of us against the other, until, as it stands now, we each of us, your Banker and our firm, hold many times as many of your bills as there ought to be in existence, all told."

Gow smiled cynically, as if rather enjoying than denying the impeachment. "Yes," he answered carelessly, "I met trickery with trickery; and I should do so again. The fact is, Dobson, instead of your having me on the hip, I have both you and Brown and your partner where I can come pretty near to dictating terms. Of course you can make a bankrupt of me; but, in doing so, you will come so near bankruptcy yourselves that it wouldn't pay. Am I right?"

"By God, Gow, if that's your little game, we won't stop at making you a bankrupt; we'll put you in considerable danger of standing in the dock at the Old Bailey. You've come altogether too near the edge of the criminal law to take the stand you are taking now."

"No threats, Dobson," said Gow imperturbably. "I'll lay you a thousand pounds you'll never even make me a bankrupt, let alone doing anything else. You can't afford to, you see. There's been altogether too much talk about defaulting solicitors already, you know. A breath of suspicion, and away goes your credit, your money; because if you force me to the wall, you'll lose every penny I owe you; and, finally, *you'll* stand a far greater chance of spending a few years in seclusion than I shall. You see, I've thought of all these things, as I always do, before I take chances."

"You're a damned scoundrel, and all the worse scoundrel

for the innocent appearance you somehow manage to keep up."

"Part of the business, you know, Dobson," returned Gow, smiling. "But thank you, just the same, for your good opinion. To be called sharp by a City of London sixty per cent. bill shyster is praise indeed. But, as we used to say at Oxford, '*cui bono*,' to whom for a good, is all this interchange of compliments. You know that I don't want to be made a bankrupt any more than you want to make me one. As to the other thing, the talk of the Old Bailey, and Holloway, and so forth, that's all bosh. You don't mean it, and I know you don't; so there you are. So, having come to a perfect understanding on this point, suppose we take a common-sense, practical view of our affairs. I owe you a lot of money, I don't deny it; more than you should ever have lent me, knowing all about my family affairs, as you've done for years. You hinted just now at a criminal prosecution. In case, by any very remote chance, you brought one, the charge would be false representation. What devilish nonsense it is to talk like *that*. You have been my father's solicitor for thirty-five to forty years, and know my affairs far better than I know them myself. It wouldn't be possible for me to make *any* representations whatever to you; and you know it as well as *I* do."

"Very well, and what are you driving at?"

"Dobson," said Gow, looking his adversary full in the face to see whether the tactics he had adopted had prepared the way for what he had to say, "Dobson, as an old fashioned solicitor, up to every move on the board, it is needless, absolutely needless to tell you what is sure to be the fate of a man who once gets into the way of making bills and raising the wind on them. The end is as sure to come as the final Judgment day is sure to come. You can put it off, and, on paper, can make a lot of

money in dealing with such a man. But what is the good of deceiving yourself, sharp old fellow, as you are? What is the good of discounting a man's bills at sixty or even eighty per cent., if the man is never going to pay them? Its like the Irish shoemaker who said 'he'd ha' charged the man double the price for the shoes, if he'd ha' known he wasn't going to pay for them.' "

"For God's sake, *will* you come to the point, Gow?" said the big man, angrily.

Gow, satisfied that he had frightened his adversary now as much as he was likely to, concluded to come to the point, as requested.

"The point is just this. Suppose I could throw a very good thing in your way, a *very* good thing indeed, would you, or would you not be disposed to take it as an offset to the payment of my bills?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so," answered Dobson, evidently interested, but also anxious. "In other words, you mean, I take it, that if you put me in the way of making a thousand pounds, I shall cancel an equal amount of your present indebtedness to me. Is *that* your proposition?"

"Yes, that's about it. But, suppose that by imparting some information to you by which you could not very well help making more money than I now owe you, why couldn't we make one transaction of it: I give you the tip, you hand me back my bills?"

"Well, I suppose we could, if the matter were genuine. But no more tricks, if you please, Mr. Gow. I've been fooled quite enough by a boy I used to pat on his head, back in his father's days."

"Yes," said Gow, laughing, "You've patted me on the head quite long enough, Dobson. You seem to forget that a boy sometimes grows to be a man."

"I shall bear it in mind, after my experience with you." said Dobson, evidently repressing a smile at the humor

of the whole situation. "But come, we're wasting time. What's your game?"

"What's this personal notice of yours in *The Times*?"

"What is it?" asked Dobson, with a startled look, "why it's just what it appears; we're advertising for the heirs of one Patrick Dunbar. In what possible manner does this relate to our transactions with *you*?"

"It would be money in your pocket to find the heir or heirs you are looking for, wouldn't it?"

"Um, yes; perhaps it would."

"No 'perhaps' about it. Would it, or would it not be good business for you to discover the heir to Patrick Dunbar?"

"Well, then, yes, it would."

"Ah, I thought so. A *very* good thing, would it not?"

"Well, that depends. Under certain conditions, it could be made a very good thing."

"For instance, suppose it was a very large fortune to be handled, and that, by a certain influence being brought to bear, your firm were appointed to manage it for the heir. It could be made a good thing of, eh?"

"Well, that's about what I mean; but how in the name of all that's mysterious did you come to know anything about the matter?"

"Dobson, a young fellow, whose only capital is his wits, and his only hope of salvation his ability to employ them, gets to know a good many things in this wicked City of London."

"It would appear so, certainly, if you really know anything of this matter. But we shan't be able to do any business on mere moonshine, you know. If you can bring about certain results, re the estate of Patrick Dunbar, I can conceive of our being able to, well, do some pretty good business together."

"Then, in plain English, if I were not only to produce

the heir of the late Patrick Dunbar in this office, but, by the pleasant things I was able conscientiously to say of Messieurs Griggs and Dobson, from long acquaintance with them, to induce the heir to allow these gentlemen to administer the estate, would it, or would it not be equivalent to the payment of the total amount of my bills in their hands?"

"That's a pretty big contract, Gow. We can do business, I dare say; but your proposition rather takes away my breath, I'm free to admit. Now, in confidence, what do you really know about this matter, and how did you come to know it?"

Gow looked at his friend with a glance in which contempt and amusement were about equally blended, as he answered, "I really don't know whether to take it as a compliment or an insult that you should ask me such a question after the lengthy proposition I have made you. I have a secret for sale. Is it likely that I shall deliver the goods on *credit* to such an old shark as I know Sammy Dobson to be? No, no. If we are to do business, let's get at it. If not, I'm off; and you can spend a year's income in advertising for your lost heir, and you'll never find him, or if you do you'll never be able to control him; whereas I *have* done the one, and I *can* do the other."

"Of course, you know, I should have to consult my partner in a matter of importance like this?"

"Naturally, you would."

"Well, he might object."

"Perhaps, but I don't think he would, if the matter was properly presented to him."

"And you absolutely refuse to give me any information until we consent to your terms?"

"Absolutely."

"Gow, a new thought strikes me. What if, instead of

our returning you your bills, as a *quid pro quo*, for your information in regard to the matter of Patrick Dunbar, we were to release *your* name on the bills, but, by an arrangement between us, put them off on some other holder; Brown, for instance. A little understanding between us, a few words in your favor from us, and the thing's done. You have no particular objection to increasing his holdings, have you?"

"Not the slightest in the world. In fact, I should enjoy it amazingly. Only bear in mind, please, that if I help you do this, we shall both be rendering ourselves liable to a charge of conspiracy, and that I shall expect you to protect me, as I certainly shall try to protect you. Another thing, if I, as a return for your release of my name on the bills you hold, help you to dispose of the other names upon them, I should expect you to speak so well of me to my Bankers and others that I can dispose of a few on my own account. Do you follow me?"

"Um, yes. I think that could be included in the arrangement."

"Well, then, I don't see but that we have practically come to terms; except, of course, that all must be reduced to writing."

"Rather dangerous, Gow, putting it in writing."

"Well, what do you suggest. You don't trust me any more than I trust you. What's to be done?"

"When could you produce the heir?"

"At any time."

"Very well, then, as soon as you produce him, we will erase your name from your bills. Does that satisfy you?"

"Yes."

"Then, what date shall we set for the settlement of the matter?"

"Thursday, at eleven o'clock."

"It's a bargain," said Dobson, and then Gow took his departure.

CHAPTER III.

Gow had effected a double object in the interview with Dobson, described in the last chapter. He had, of course, conditionally upon his being able to prove his friend's claim to the estate in question, arranged for the settlement of his own indebtedness to Griggs and Dobson. Secondly, he had gone a long way on the road to securing a very powerful hold upon Dunbar, in the event of his coming into his money. The next step, namely, to prove, or to enable Dunbar to prove his claim, was not so clear. Here, again, however, his interview with Dobson had done him yeoman service. He had gone to that interview fairly well satisfied that the advertisement he had seen in the *Times* related to an estate. Any notice speaking of the possible "advantage" that will accrue to a person by calling upon a solicitor in London, by long association has come to mean the discovery of the lost heir to an estate; and nothing else. Still, suspecting a thing, and absolutely knowing it, are two very different affairs. He *knew* there was an estate involved now, and he also knew it was a large one.

Now, in regard to his friend's title to it, he was proceeding on an assumption, it was true; but, all things considered, it was not much more of an assumption than the one he had already succeeded in turning into a certainty, by means of his boldly following it up. Why should he not be equally successful in the latter instance? Then, again, he had Dobson's interest on his side, instead of opposed to him as it easily might have been. The wish was

father to the thought; and that is always a tremendous factor in such affairs. He had succeeded in setting Dobson's mind in a receptive condition to assist Dunbar in establishing his claim. In fact, the former had been induced to admit that it was largely to his interest to have the latter establish it.

So, as far as he could see, Gow had every reason to congratulate himself upon the progress he had achieved up to the present time. Only one thing he had neglected to do, which gave him a little uneasiness, and that was he had failed to ask Dobson not to allude to the fact of his visit to Dunbar. This, however, was a risk he must take his chances in regard to; as it would have weakened his position with the sharp old solicitor to have discovered his (Gow's) disloyalty to his friend. The next move was to see Dunbar and ascertain whether or not he had made any progress in his own investigation of the affair. So, on the Tuesday evening after his visit to Dobson, Gow stationed himself in the coffee-room of the Craven Hotel, in the hope that his friend would drop in on his way home. He was not disappointed. Dunbar was anxious to see Gow for the purpose of communicating to him his discovery of his uncle's informal will. Having accepted Gow's offer of an introduction to Dobson, and made a confidant of him so far in the progress of the affair, he could hardly have done less.

"Well, what luck, old boy?" Gow began, cheerily, as his friend entered the room, and took a seat near him before the fire.

"Good luck, so far, I should say, Gow, responded Dunbar. I have found out, to what I consider a certainty now, that, first, I had an uncle Patrick; second, that he formerly lived near Cork; third, that he emigrated to America in the thirties of the present century. Then, fourth, and last, but most important of all, as it seems to me, I have dis-

covered that my uncle Patrick was indebted to my father for a very considerable sum of money actually advanced to him; and that, as a protection to my father for the final repayment of said sum, he made a will in his favor."

Gow, who sat with his mouth opening wider and wider as his friend went on detailing his progress in the solution of an affair which had come to mean financial life or death to him, could hardly restrain himself at the finish; and when Dunbar came to the statement that he had actually found a will, he jumped up from his chair and capered about the room in a manner calculated to disgust the staid old gentlemen who generally frequented the place; but, who, the time being Christmas, were presumably in the bosoms of their families. Finally, he resumed his seat, and said, "And now, old boy, what in the world more do we require to prove our claim? *You* certainly are satisfied of it, aren't you?"

"Frankly speaking, I am, Gow; but, it seems too good to be true, as my mother says, for one thing; and then I really have no proof that my uncle is *the* Patrick Dunbar they are looking for. There may have been a dozen of them, for all I know."

"Oh ye of little faith," said Gow, joyously, "Why, my dear boy we've made miles of progress since we last met. Rome wasn't built in a day, as you ought to know at your time of life. If, in the next few weeks, we go on as fast, or half as fast, as we have gone so far, we shall be in the actual possession of the property before you can say 'Jack Robinson.'"

"Very well, Gow; it can't come too soon, but I'm distrustful of fate, in this case, even if she comes bearing gifts. It seems too utterly and entirely out of my line, you know."

"I know, old chap, it is not easy for a man who has had a hard dull grind of it in life to take a cheerful view of

anything relating to his own future good fortune. But look at it in this way: Would this piece of good luck be any more impossible, or out of the due order of things for *you* than for some other chap who possibly may have had twice the hard luck you've had? This estate must go to *someone*. Why not to you, as well, or better, than to any one else? Will you answer me that?"

"I admit the truth of all you say, and I thank you for saying it," said Dunbar, seriously, "but I have my doubts, just the same, and I shall continue to have them, until the matter is finally settled."

"But not to the extent of putting difficulties in your own way by your lack of confidence, I hope?"

"No, certainly not. I have had ocular proof now that I am the heir of my uncle, Patrick Dunbar, for I have his will, and a letter explaining to any one's entire satisfaction why he felt called upon to make it in my father's favor; or, in fact, the 'valuable consideration,' as I suppose the lawyers would call it. He owed my father money, which he honorably wished to repay. He could hardly have done less. But, you see, Gow, I put myself in any lawyer's place, Dobson's, for instance, and ask myself, 'would you feel you had done your whole duty to your clients in turning over a valuable estate to a person who has so little to show in the way of evidence of a title to it as I have?' Then, I answer myself, 'no, I certainly should not,' and that is about as far as I can get."

Gow asked to see the papers, and Dunbar showed them to him. After reading them carefully over, he handed them back to his friend, saying, impressively, as far as it was in the man to say anything impressively, "Dunbar, in every case of this kind, some species of doubt has to be overcome before the right man is found to take title to an estate which otherwise would go a begging. If it were not so, why should anybody take the trouble to employ solici-

tors to look the matter up, and why should those solicitors spend their own time and their clients' money in asking a question that they themselves could answer, or in looking for a man who was already found? The last time I saw you, we neither of us knew a tithe of that we actually know now in regard to this matter, and yet we decided to take the stand that we were the true heirs, and put the other fellow to the proof that we were *not*. With the evidence we have up our sleeves now, it seems to me that there should be no show whatever of doubt or weakness on our parts. *We are the heirs*, and the other fellow must come to our way of thinking; and, leave it to me, he *shall*!"

Sharp man of the world as Gow, young as he was, had come to be by force of circumstances, he probably in the bottom of his heart recognized the difficulties yet to be overcome in the path of a free entry into the promised land of the Dunbar estate quite as keenly, or more so, than Dunbar himself. But he knew the value of the force of absolute conviction in the mind of an honest and sincere man like his friend, and intended, as usual, to play it for all it was worth. "The truth, and nothing but the truth," he went on, "is what we are after in this matter, just as it is what the other side is after. If this estate belongs to you, as you are thoroughly convinced it does by this time, you want it; and you must have it. It would be just as dishonest for someone else to try to snatch it from you, as the matter stands, as it would be for you to attempt to snatch it from someone else if it stood differently. What I want you to do is to look at the thing with the absolute conviction that you are in the right, and that you are the rightful owner of this estate. *I*, aided by circumstances which I feel sure will come to light, will do the rest. Will you do your part?"

"Yes, I will, Gow, and I feel perfectly right in doing so."

Then Gow gave Dunbar some hints as to his attitude towards Dobson, at the coming interview, and a general lecture on the value of backbone in asserting one's self and one's rights in this world, which, springing as they did from a long and varied experience, had their due weight; and then the meeting broke up with an agreement to meet at Dobson's office at the time agreed upon, which was the following Thursday at eleven o'clock.

Thursday came, and, prompt to the minute, the two young men met in the ante-room of Dobson's office. It had been agreed between them that whoever arrived first should wait for the other, with a view to impressing Dobson with the weight of their united personalities. They now requested the clerk to announce them, which that functionary did, in due form. They found Dobson seated at his desk with an imposing array of legal documents before him, and looking for all the world like the overworked family solicitor and important man of affairs the world thought him to be; and would continue to think, until the most overwhelming evidence was brought to the contrary. The critical observer, however, would have detected several ear marks of trouble and anxiety about the man; one of them being the obsequious manner in which he received our friends, Dunbar and Gow.

"Dobson," the latter said, with all the impressiveness of a well rehearsed rôle he had set himself, "this is my old friend Mr. Patrick Dunbar, of Elm-hurst Lodge, Putney, and of Billiter Square, City. He is also the son of the late William Dunbar, of London, formerly of Cork, Ireland, and the nephew of Patrick Dunbar, also, formerly of Cork, but subsequently of New York, in the States. In view of the importance of the matter we have in hand, however, I have requested my friend Dunbar to bring with him for your inspection all papers in his possession relating to his birth, family history, and so forth; which he has done,

and all of which are entirely at your disposal, although I have not the slightest doubt, that, having known me and my father before me, for these fifty years, my word would amply suffice. And now, sir, we should consider it a favor if you would inform us what advantage, as stated in your notice in the *Times*, is to ensue to the heir of the late Patrick Dunbar in calling upon you; for here he is."

The easy assurance with which this little set speech was delivered, together with the large issues at stake in the crafty old lawyer's present position, were almost sufficient to carry the day with no further evidence whatever; but a lawyer never gets over being a lawyer, and a lawyer never by any chance *admits* anything until it has been legally proven. So, neither Gow nor Dunbar were surprised in the least to have the cross-examination, usual and to be expected in such cases, fully gone into, exactly as if Dunbar had come to his office entirely unvouched for, instead of with the overflowingly ample introduction he had brought with him. Finally, after having to all appearing, fully satisfied himself as to young Dunbar's legal identity, but with no allusion whatever on either side to the real question at issue, namely the estate to be disposed of, Dobson said:

"Mr. Dunbar, through our mutual friend Gow, you have asked me the purport of the notice addressed to the heirs of Patrick Dunbar in the *Times*. Being now fully satisfied of your identity, thanks to your papers, which are all apparently in perfect order, *and* to our friend's highly satisfactory introduction, I now feel at liberty to freely disclose the nature of the business we have in hand. In doing so I shall begin by reading you a portion of a letter addressed to us by our American correspondents, Messrs. Smith & Moulton, of New York."

Here Dobson, with some show of difficulty in finding the document he was looking for in the mass of legal wreckage lying before him on his desk, finally extracted a let-

ter, which, having adjusted his glasses, and cleared his throat, as if desiring to add impressiveness to what he had to communicate, he read as follows:

"About the beginning of the present century, a young man, by the name of Hammond, came to New York from some New England town, with a few thousand dollars capital with which he began to speculate in land. At that time, the whole northern portion of Manhattan Island was almost as wild as it was when Hudson first discovered it. Gradually, as the population of the town increased, the land began to be taken up first as farms, and later as gentlemen's country places; but it could be had at that time for almost a song, so distant was it from what anyone at that time would have considered the northernmost possible limit of the city's growth.

"Young Hammond, foreseeing a great future for the city, and desiring to secure a home in the country adjacent, finally bought a large farm on what was then known as the Bloomingdale road, some five or six miles north of the then city limits. The place was inaccessible, uncultivated, and unattractive; but he went to work with a will and developed it into a farm; built a cheaply constructed wooden house upon it, and took a newly married wife to live there. As time went on, the fact of a respectable family's having settled in the place induced *others* to settle there, and soon what was once an isolated farm, became the centre of rather a numerous settlement of gentlemen's places. Hammond prospered wonderfully in his business for a while, as his money being invested in land, and land rapidly increasing in value, he could hardly help doing. But things took a turn. Money became a very difficult thing to come by, and land became the very worst commodity to borrow it upon. Hammond soon found himself 'land poor,' and very land poor, at that. Buying, as he had done, on a rising market, it had been extremely easy for him to mortgage his

property for very nearly what he had paid for it, and with the money thus acquired to go on buying. This he had done to such an extent that when the money panic came he was so deeply involved as to be in great danger of being forced to the wall. In his extremity he was compelled to allow a number of his mortgages to be foreclosed. At last it came to a point where he had practically nothing left but the homestead; and even that was mortgaged for an amount, which, though small, was unattainable to the unfortunate young man at that time.

"In this trouble, Hammond naturally looked about him for some friendly assistance; but, for a long time looked in vain. Finally, just as he was about to lose his home by foreclosure, aid came to him from the most unexpected source, as sometimes happens in such emergencies. Among his friends, was a bright young Irishman by the name of Murphy, who had recently come to the States to seek his fortunes. Murphy was evidently well brought up, and was a genial, wholesouled kind of young man, whom Hammond had liked from his first meeting with him. In some way it had come to Murphy's knowledge that his friend was in financial difficulties, and, with the warm-hearted impulsiveness of the Irish nature, he called upon Hammond, and asked if he could in any way be of service to him. Hammond replied that he could only serve him by lending him a matter of a few thousand dollars, the amount of the mortgage upon his farm.

"Now, to the Irish kindness of heart and willingness to oblige a friend, is very often joined the *other* Irish quality of *inability* to do so. Murphy was sincerely sorry, but he had no money, and saw no possibility of coming by any. In fact, he had left his friend's house, and had tried to forget the incident, when it occurred to him to try and borrow the money for Hammond's pressing needs from some of his own personal friends. Among the number

of these, was a man by the name of Patrick Dunbar, from Cork, Ireland. Dunbar was a wild young fellow, like himself, fond of play, and somewhat unreliable in many ways, but possessed of a good heart. To him, therefore, he went, and told Hammond's tale of woe. Dunbar at first said it was impossible for him to do anything, but then seemed to change his mind, and ended up by offering to raise half of the amount, if Murphy would raise the other half. This arrangement was finally carried out. The money was handed to Hammond, who paid off the mortgage, but made a new one in favor of Murphy for the sum advanced, who in turn transferred half of the security to his friend Dunbar; and there the matter ended for the present.

"Not very long after this, Hammond, who had never been strong, and whose life of late had been a very wearing one, died, leaving his widow poorly provided for. Beyond the farm, in fact, which was now free from encumbrance other than the mortgage held by Murphy and Dunbar, she was well nigh penniless. Owing to the late Hammond's regard for Murphy, and the pecuniary obligation he was under to him, the latter had become a very frequent visitor at the Hammond's. In her trouble and penury, the widow, therefore, appealed to the young man for assistance and advice. Then, as pity is said to be akin to love, Murphy finally fell in love with the widow, proposed to her, was accepted, and ruled in the place of Hammond deceased, on the farm.

"As a result of all this, it seemed proper and right for Dunbar and Murphy to come to an understanding in regard to the matter of the mortgage, and, as there seemed but little prospect of its ever being paid off, as financial affairs looked at the time, by an arrangement agreeable to all the parties interested, a friendly foreclosure suit was entered against Mrs. Murphy, late Hammond, which was allowed to go by default, the property was bid in by Mur-

phy for the amount of the mortgage, and finally a one-half undivided interest in it was conveyed to Dunbar. As time went on, these two men had further dealings in New York real estate together, with a result that they got loaded up with land, heavily encumbered with mortgages, as speculative land in those days was pretty sure to be, and finally got into financial difficulties; just as Hammond had done, and as thousands of people did in the good old real-estate gambling days of New York.

"As a result of these entanglements, his gaming debts, his dissolute ways, and the final stoppage of all funds from home, Dunbar concluded, or more properly speaking, was *forced* to conclude that New York was no place for him. So, one bright day, he turned up missing, leaving a letter to Murphy in which he spoke of himself as an irretrievably ruined man, and asking him to make the best he could out of the wreck of his affairs, to pay himself for some dues from him, and to do as he thought best with the rest of his estate, if indeed, there was any 'rest,' which he very much doubted there ever would be.

"Shortly after the disappearance of Dunbar, matters took a turn for the better in New York real estate, and prices began to mount again, until a veritable real estate boom set in. Then it was that the partnership holdings of land of Dunbar and Murphy rose so rapidly and to such tremendously high figures that Murphy was able to repay himself the amount due from Dunbar, and in addition sold enough land for the partnership account to make them both very rich men. Murphy then made every endeavor to find his late partner, but without success. He wrote to postmasters in all the cities of the West, whither he supposed he had gone, and even advertised, but nothing came of it. Dunbar, it seems, had become so thoroughly discouraged and frightened by his experiences of business life in New York as to have firmly made up his mind never to return.

In fact, it transpired afterward that the very means taken to bring him back had had the contrary effect. Fearing that an advertisement he saw in a newspaper asking him to return was a snare, he actually was frightened out of the town in which he was then living and further into the West.

“In the meantime, Murphy went on prospering in New York. Acting upon the instructions contained in Dunbar’s parting letter, which had all the force and effect of a power of attorney, he began selling off their holdings at fabulously high prices, and scrupulously putting away his partner’s half of the money arising from such sales. The Hammond farm, or homestead, had by this time become enormously valuable, and was being rapidly encroached upon by the advancing requirements of a great and populous city, such as New York had become. Murphy began to divide it up into city lots, and to sell each one of them at prices far in advance of the price of the whole original farm. He finally so reduced it in size as to leave a plot just large enough for his own needs, and then stopped. Then, being an enormously rich man, by this time, he built a princely house, well furnished and appointed, and began to enjoy life, as he certainly was entitled to do, having regard to his loyalty to Hammond, in his lifetime, and his widow after him.

“In time, an only child, a daughter, was born to them, whom they named Helena, and both father and the mother, fond as they were of each other, fairly worshipped this beautiful child. It was an ideal household in every way. Murphy, although an Irishman, and a Roman Catholic, was a highly educated, refined man; by no means a bigot. He turned out also a most affectionate husband and father, as well as a strictly honorable man. Then, as was constantly happening in New York in those days, prices of land dropped again. Then came a panic. But Murphy,

having profited by the experience of former years, now had money in large quantities to invest, instead of going a borrowing it. So, still acting under his late partner's general instructions, he now went into the market and bought largely of land, which he knew must in the future become immensely valuable. His assumption was fully confirmed by a subsequent tremendous rise in land values; and, as a result, both he and his absent partner became richer than ever.

"So, years went on; and, by a series of lucky investments, sales, repurchases, and the absolutely irresistible upward tendency of all things appertaining to land in New York, Murphy became richer and richer, and, by the same token, Dunbar. Murphy, although his and his partner's interests were still legally undivided, kept them absolutely apart, so that in case of any disaster in his own affairs, his partner's share would be uninvolved. So, Dunbar, unconsciously to himself, was a very rich man. He had his rent rolls by this time running into the tens of thousands of dollars a year, and, in addition, a very large holding of New York property which was all the time doubling and redoubling in value.

"Then came a change. Murphy, as thousands have done before him, and will do until the end of time, became inflated by his invariably good luck and uninterrupted success. He was getting on in years, by this time, also, and perhaps had to a certain degree lost his grip upon financial affairs. At any rate, operating upon what his friends and his own judgment counseled him was a sure thing, he at last, like the pitcher that went once too often to the well, got broken. He got into serious difficulties, and couldn't recover himself, as he had done once before, when a younger man. Honorable to the end, he protected his absent partner's interest, even at the expense of his own. But, from being a rich man, he became a poor one, then

a broken-hearted one, and at last died, leaving his wife and daughter almost in poverty. They still retained what was left of the old homestead, the fine house, now far too large for them, and from neglect, grown dull and rather uncanny; but, it was probable, upon an adjustment of Dunbar's undivided share in the property of the late Murphy, that even this last remaining shelter for these two unfortunate ladies might be required of them to effect a final settlement.

"Our firm having acted in bygone years for Mr. Murphy was now required to take full possession and charge of all matters relating to her late husband's estate, by his widow. Acting not only upon her husband's instructions, but upon her own absolute determination to see justice done to Dunbar, who, although absent, and probably dead, had once befriended her, this noble woman now begged of us to put every agency in operation to find Patrick Dunbar, or if dead, his legal successor or heir, to the end that he should come into his own. So earnest was she in this, that she actually spent her own money, which she could ill afford, in furtherance of the search. Finally, as a result of our inquiries, we came upon what was to us absolute evidence of the demise of Patrick Dunbar. He died in California in 1872, a bachelor and without issue, as far as we could ascertain.

"After being informed of Dunbar's death, Mrs. Murphy, although now in a position to quietly take possession of the large estate of her late husband's partner, and although being very poor, instructed us to go on in our endeavors to find a possible heir. So, having advertised in the American newspapers to no effect, we now request you to do the same in the *English* papers; for, not until they have exhausted every possible resource, will these two splendid women feel justified in taking to their own use, poor as they are, one dollar of the property which may belong to

the legal heir of the man who long years ago came to their rescue in time of need."

"This is the present situation of affairs. The estate amounts in round figures, to between three and four millions of dollars. There is a rent roll of about one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, a large amount of splendid land in the most fashionable part of New York, rapidly increasing in value, and a large sum of ready money all awaiting to be turned over to the heir, or heirs of Patrick Dunbar, who can successfully prove title to the estate."

CHAPTER IV.

As Dobson finished reading this long letter and laid it down upon his desk, the two young men sat looking at each other absolutely dumfounded, not only at the colossal windfall the simple, innocent-looking notice in the *Times* had thrown in their way, but at the absolutely unbroken chain of evidence going to prove Dunbar's title to the estate this letter had pieced out. All the parts fitted together like the parts of a Chinese puzzle which had been scattered but had now been reassembled. Nothing had as yet been said by either Dunbar or Gow of the discovery of Patrick Dunbar's will, and the letter of explanation which accompanied it. It had been a part of Gow's program, as well as of his instructions to Dunbar to volunteer no information whatever, but to only answer questions when put to him, and not before. Gow well understood and appreciated the value of the conservation of power, as well as the weakness of a cause bolstered up by a profuse and unnecessary show of assertion. So they had kept their last and most powerful gun in reserve. Gow was the first to speak:

"Well, gentlemen, then it appears to be only a matter of entering into possession; as far as I can see. It's a fairish estate, Dobson, eh?"

"Fairish isn't the word, Gow; it's a huge estate. Thirty thousand a year, to say nothing of lands and houses, cash in Bank, and God knows what all. But, you see, in the absence of a will, having regard to the extent of the property, the fact of its being situated in a foreign country,

the time that has elapsed between the death of the devisor and the fortunate discovery of the heir at law, and so forth, we may have some obstacles to overcome yet before we take possession. And then, of course, though highly improbable, it is possible, you know, that, although our friend here, Mr. Patrick Dunbar, can clearly prove himself to be the son of his father and the nephew of his uncle, it may be a different family of Dunbars entirely, that we are looking for. You see—”

Here Gow could restrain himself no longer, and there no longer being any reason why he should, he brought out his big gun all loaded and in condition to put a clincher on the whole matter. “See here, Dobson,” he said sharply, and with the air of a man entrenched behind the very strongest position, “do you suppose for an instant that my friend Dunbar has gone into this matter in any way unprepared to make full and incontrovertible proof of the justice of his claim? If you do, you make the gravest mistake of your lifetime; old as you are. Up to this time, I believe, we have answered all questions put to us in an absolutely frank and open manner that would have carried conviction with them anywhere; producing necessary documents, and all else required. If my memory serves me, you have not yet asked us to produce either the will of the late Patrick Dunbar, nor any evidence of the fact that my friend is *the* Dunbar your friends in New York are looking for. Do I understand that you *now* request us to produce these two items of evidence? If so, kindly out with it; and don’t keep us waiting.”

“Why, um, of course, you know, Gow, I don’t for a moment doubt either of the matters of fact which these two bits of evidence would conclusively prove. I’m as anxious as you or your friend can be to see this matter cleared up; but Smith & Moulton, of New York, you know—”

“Oh, yes, Spenlow and Jorkins, over again;” said Gow,

contemptuously. "Dunbar, give me the rest of your papers. Thank you." "Here you are, Dobson; here's the will of the late Patrick Dunbar, rather informally drawn, it's true; but quite in order, for all that. And here's a letter from Patrick Dunbar in which he acknowledges his indebtedness to his brother William for a large sum of money had and obtained, and speaks of having made a will in his favor to protect him for his disbursements on his account. Then again, here's an allusion to Murphy and the real estate speculations; and all the rest of it. In God's name, what further proof could any lawyer want; either in England, Ireland, America, or in Kingdom come?"

Dobson took the papers, with a trembling hand, and carefully examined them. "Perfect," he muttered to himself, and then aloud: "You are a most fortunate man, Mr. Dunbar, in being able to show so clear a title to what anyone would have unquestionably asserted to be your estate, but which it might have been a little difficult to prove, for all that. I congratulate you with all my heart; for, armed with these papers, we should have no further difficulty in our way." Then, turning to Gow, he said, sharply, but with a merry twinkle in his eye, "Where the devil, Gow, did you get your legal training from? None but a man with a legal mind would have retained so much up his sleeve in the way of evidence as you had up yours, to play it so effectively as you have done. I congratulate *you*, my boy."

"To the devil with your congratulations, Dobson," said the young man, carelessly, but evidently pleased, for all that, "and now will you kindly communicate with your friends in New York as speedily as possible and bring this matter to a close."

"Indeed, I will," said Dobson; and then the young men rose to take their departures. They descended the old-fash-

ioned stairway to the street, and Gow taking Dunbar's arm familiarly, they entered Gray's Inn yard by the wicket opening from Theobald's Road, and were leisurely walking through the grounds, intending to emerge from them by the Holborn entrance, when Dunbar suddenly stopped short, and appeared to be debating a matter which had suddenly entered his mind.

"What's up now?" asked Gow, rather impatiently, "forgotten something?"

"Yes," answered Dunbar, "yes; I *have* forgotten something, something I fully intended to say to Dobson while he was reading his long letter; but I was so taken aback by his announcement of the size of the estate that I confess I forgot it. I must return; but there is no occasion for your doing so, if you are pressed for time."

The contrast between the behavior of the two men as the result of their interview was very marked. Gow was boisterously exultant. He had won a tremendous stake with no very strikingly good cards in his hand. His exultation was coarse, and his manner towards his friend somewhat domineering, as if he wished it understood that he, Gow, was really the man to be thanked for the successful issue of the whole affair. Dunbar's attitude, as judged by his silence and lack of demonstration of any kind, might have been attributed to either a feeling of gratitude too deep for expression, or to some other consideration which for the moment, at least, about equally balanced what might otherwise have been a jubilation as eager as Gow's. In either event, the latter had no intention of allowing Dunbar to in any way run a risk of upsetting a campaign which, under his management, had so far progressed so well. He was too proud or too diplomatic to ask questions, so with a grunt of dissatisfaction he turned on his heel and followed his friend, saying: "I've nothing to do, old man, and as you've got the day to yourself, I was going

to propose taking our luncheon together at the Café Royal, in Regent Street. I'll go back with you first, however, and we can see about the luncheon afterwards. I don't suppose you will be long."

"No, Gow; five minutes will answer."

Then they both lapsed into silence, until they stood again in Dobson's private office. "Mr. Dobson," Dunbar began, "in hearing you read the account of the heroic self-sacrifice and honesty of those two women in New York, I fully intended to say something I had in my mind at the time, but did not wish to interrupt you. After that, it was crowded out of my mind by other things. Will you kindly request your friends in New York to say to those brave ladies, with my most respectful salutations, that I shall refuse to accept the estate which appears to be mine by inheritance until their wants have been fully and amply provided for, and that I know my mother and sisters will take the same view of the matter. If Messieurs Smith and Moulton will kindly ascertain what amount will render Mrs. Murphy and her daughter entirely comfortable for the rest of their days, I shall consider it an honor to sign any papers, or take any action that lies in my power to attain this end. This is what I returned to say to you, and I wish you would make it a part of your letter to your New York friends."

This was all said with a quiet dignity that left no possible doubt as to the sincerity of his purpose, and yet with a certain authority which would evidently brook no denial.

"I will carry out your instructions to the letter, Mr. Dunbar," said Dobson, obsequiously; "but, you will pardon my suggesting, perhaps, that it is a little unusual to begin to give away an estate before you have taken possession of it."

"You will be good enough to convey my message to your friends, and particularly request them to give it to their

clients," said Dunbar, quietly. "With such brave creatures as these ladies have proved themselves to be, I am willing to take my own chances of being misunderstood."

Here Gow ventured an objection, but Dunbar shut him off before it took actual form. Dunbar was evidently in no mood to be trifled with that day. As they were passing out of Dobson's office, the old solicitor requested Gow to remain a moment, as he had something to say to him about his own personal affairs. As Gow was quite as anxious to have a word in private with Dobson as the latter was to have one with him, he excused himself to Dunbar, intimating that as he might be detained longer than he, Dunbar, would care to wait, they had better give up the plan for lunching together; but, agreeing to meet at the Craven on the ensuing evening, at the usual time. As this arrangement pleased Dunbar much better than it would have been complimentary to his friend to admit, he shook him by the hand, and took his departure; leaving his two friends to have their conference out by themselves.

As soon as Dunbar had disappeared into the street, Dobson began. Well done, Gow, my boy. I really didn't think it was in you."

"Didn't think *what* was in me?" replied Gow, rather curtly.

"Why, to handle this affair as cleverly as you have done. You seem to have the bit well in that fellow's mouth. You can turn him any way you wish. Of course, you will remember our agreement about bringing the business of managing his estate, after he gets it, to us?"

"Certainly, providing you carry out your end of the agreement by releasing my name from the bills you hold."

"Oh, yes, to be sure; but, you know Dunbar has not quite come into his estate yet, and in the meantime several of your bills are about due. We shall expect you, of course, to take care of *those*, you know."

"Just like you, Dobson; biting off your nose to spite your face. I had supposed until now that we had a definite understanding in regard to *all* my bills, but as this appears not to be the case, we will call the whole arrangement off, and begin over again. I will meet my bills as they come due; and, you understand, I will take Dunbar and his business wheresoever I choose; and now, good day."

The young man rose from his chair, took his hat and walking stick, and was proceeding toward the door, with every apparent intention of passing through it, never to re-enter it again, when Dobson sprang upon him, and almost forced him to resume his seat.

"Don't make a damned fool of yourself, Gow," he said, in evident trepidation. "We neither of us can afford to quarrel with the other just now."

"I can dispense with you much better than you can dispense with *me*, my friend," said Gow, angrily. "I'm in clover now, or soon shall be, and I'm of more than half a mind to throw you over for good and all. I'm sick to death of your damned bullying ways, and your sixty per cent. Jew rates. Its all very well for you to talk about our not being in a position to quarrel; but take very good care of yourself, my friend, or I'll teach you a lesson you'll not forget in a day or two, if ever at all."

There had been a distinct ring of triumph and exultation in Gow's attitude towards his friend, or his enemy, whichever you choose to call a man who loans money at sixty per cent., ever since the latter half of his assumption in regard to Dunbar's ability to prove his title to his estate had been turned into a certainty. Luck was running strongly in his favor that day. It was safe to trust it with one more deal of the cards. So, after the men had sat for a few moments each engaged in silently taking stock of the probable number of guns the other had in his battery, an

idea seemed to suddenly occur to Gow: "See here, Dobson," he said defiantly, "my first impulse is to get up and leave your office, never to enter it again; but, on second thoughts, I will make you one more proposition, and *only* one; mind you. You must take it or leave it at once; otherwise, by George, I'll take my man to another solicitor, as sure as my name is Gow. I need money, considerable money to pay my Christmas bills and to settle some matters with my Bankers. I could easily go to Dunbar now and get the money from him, but I don't care to; for manifold reasons. The former arrangement we made about releasing my name from the bills in your hands and shouldering the remaining names off upon Brown, was ingenious; but it would take time, and I need the money at once to be of any use to me. It would be a neater financial transaction, as matters stand, for me simply to draw upon you now and here for the money I require. So, just get five bill stamps of a shilling each, and I will draw upon you for five thousand pounds. Having done that, of course, I will meet all maturing bills as they come due."

"Good Lord, man," exclaimed Dobson, in alarm, "you can't mean *that*. Why I haven't five thousand pounds loose in the world."

"Perhaps not," said Gow, carelessly; "but you have credit at your Bankers. If *they* don't care for my acceptances, go to Brown and tell him the position I stand in as regards Dunbar, and perhaps *he'll* take 'em. At any rate, those are my terms; and if you accept, I'll trouble you to produce those stamped bits of paper at once for me to fill in, and I'll take your check for the money, but I'll not pay it into my Bank until you have had a chance to discount the bills. Come now, this is my last word."

"And in return you promise to use your influence with Dunbar to retain us as his solicitors in the management of his estate?"

"Yes, I do."

"At this Dobson rang his bell for the clerk, and asking Gow for five shillings to pay for the stamps, sent the man to the nearest Post Office for the bill forms; and in a half hour, Gow took his departure from the office in Theobald's Road with a check for five thousand pounds in his pocket.

In the meantime, Dunbar was passing along Oxford Street, when he suddenly remembered that he had had no luncheon. He looked at his watch and found the hour to be nearly one o'clock. He had by this time reached Tottenham Court road, intending to take the short cut to Piccadilly Circus through Shaftsbury Avenue. Instead of this, however, he turned into the "Horse Shoe," in Tottenham Court road, near the corner of Oxford Street, and ordered a simple luncheon. As he had arranged with his people in the city to take the whole day off, he was in no haste in finishing his meal, but, on the contrary, took it very leisurely, his mind wandering off into all the possible flights of fancy which his altered condition in life suggested. After luncheon, he went into the smoking room, ordered a drop of whiskey and water, and lighting his pipe, spent another hour in meditation. So, it was getting on to four o'clock when he finally emerged from the "Horse Shoe," and took his way down Shaftsbury Avenue. Night was beginning to close in, and the thick yellow fog of the short winter days in London hung over everything, obscuring the vision and giving a man enveloped in it a certain feeling of isolation from the world which he could so dimly see about him, while it brought forcibly to his mind the picture of the cosy fireside of his home in anticipation of his arrival there. The air had that penetrating, damp chill of the London winter, which to the man with a fireside waiting for him not far off, is tolerable; but to the homeless wanderer of the streets, is inhospitable and hopeless indeed.

He had nearly reached Piccadilly Circus, where he in-

tended to take the bus for Putney, when, passing under a street lamp, his attention was attracted by the outline of a woman's figure heavily leaning against it, as if to prevent herself from falling. Although seen through the darkness and fog, which imparted a phantom-like appearance to everything within its grasp, there were unmistakable marks about the woman which excluded her from the class of the lost creatures who frequent that part of the town. In the first place, it was too early in the evening for them to be about. Then, although only indistinctly seen, there was a refined air about her. There was none of the tawdry finery about her which is so often the distinguishing feature of those unfortunate women. On the contrary, she was modestly dressed, and, under different conditions, would never have been mistaken for anything other than what she appeared, a lady. *But*, she was unattended; she was in a very bad quarter of the town for a respectable woman to be seen alone in, and, to the indifferent or unpractised eye, she would have appeared to be in a condition, more's the pity of it, not unusual to that class of women, namely, the worse for liquor.

Now Dunbar had naturally a very tender place in his heart for woman. This feeling of tenderness had that day been very much augmented, not only by his own sudden elevation into happiness and prosperity, but by the account of the noble action of two women in a far country who had freely and willingly stripped themselves of all the prosperity with which he had been clothed, in the pursuance of what they considered their bounden duty. It appeared proper and right to him, on account of the circumstances of this particular case, to extend a helping hand to a woman in distress, even in the face of all the possibilities connected with taking such a course. He therefore approached, and asked, "Are you in any trouble? Is there anything I can do for you?"

The woman, aroused by perhaps the first kindly voice she had heard for many a day, replied faintly, but in a manner to disarm any suspicion as to her perfect sobriety, "I have been taken with a fainting fit; would you, might I ask you to go with me to the chemist's across the street to get me a restorative?"

Dunbar's answer was to support her as tenderly and chivalrously into the apothecary's as if she had been the finest lady in the land. Assisting her to a chair, he procured the necessary restorative, the man in charge of the shop looking at the proceedings from behind his counter with anything but apparent approbation. As soon as the young woman had sufficiently regained consciousness to converse intelligently, Dunbar asked her if he could be of any further assistance. "Could he call a cab?" The vehemence with which the suggestion of a cab was rejected had the effect of opening Dunbar's eyes to at least *one* feature of this poor woman's case, which was that she was penniless. In the strong contrast which his own newly found prosperity offered to the miserable condition of this poor woman, Dunbar found it both easy and natural to sink all other considerations than her immediate succor. He paid the druggist for his medicine, and going to the door of the shop, hailed a cab and assisted the woman into it, asking her where to direct the cabman to drive. She gave an address in Pimlico, another rather suspicious circumstance; but Dunbar had fully made up his mind to see the adventure to an end, wherever it should lead him.

The woman had by this time so far recovered as to be apparently keenly sensible to all that was going on about her. Among other things, she was evidently touched to the heart by Dunbar's attentions. As they groped their way through fog and the darkness of the night, the young man asked her:

"When you felt your fainting turn coming on, why didn't you go immediately to the druggist and get the necessary medicine to relieve you?"

"I did," she answered.

"Well, then, may I ask, why did you ask me to go with you a second time?"

"Because the man refused to serve me unless accompanied by a gentleman, and ordered me out of the shop."

"Is this possible?"

"It is not only possible; it is true."

A silence ensued, and then Dunbar asked again: "And would you mind telling me to what you attribute your fainting fit?"

The woman hesitated, as if ashamed or too proud to answer, but finally said:

"Hunger."

"Hunger, good God, why didn't you tell me when we were in a part of the town where we could find an eating house? We shall certainly find none about here; and it's rather late to go back. What shall we do?"

The woman was silent. Dunbar waited a moment for an answer, and then tried again: "How are you living at the address you gave me. That is, is it a lodging house, or have you your own rooms?"

"I have *one* room by myself, at the top of the house."

"Have you any means of preparing a meal in your room?"

"Yes; I do my own cooking."

"Are there any shops near where you live, at which we could get what you require?"

"Yes; but I have no fuel to cook with."

"But that can be had, as well as food, near where you live?"

"Oh yes; if you have the money. But I have none."

Dunbar then requested his companion to direct the cabman to stop at the shop nearest her lodging where the

necessary supplies could be secured, and then they both lapsed into silence, while they continued to grope their way onward through the fog. At last they came to a street where there were more lights and signs of activity apparent than in those through which they had been passing, and soon the cabman pulled up in front of a grocer's shop, where they alighted. Having entered the place, Dunbar requested the young woman to select the articles she required, which she did with the avidity of a half-starved person, yet with the moderation of a proud nature reluctant to impose upon the kindness of a benefactor. At any rate, with a little gentle pressure upon Dunbar's part, he soon had the satisfaction of seeing a generous store of provisions and fuel, not only bought and paid for, but placed in a barrow and actually on its way to its destination. Then moving towards the door, both he and the young woman stood facing each other, as if each were waiting for the other to propose the next move to be made. The woman spoke first: "My lodging is only a moment's walk from here, and, as I should not like to be seen in a cab with a gentleman by the people in the house, I will say good night to you here; and may God bless you for all you have done for me."

She involuntarily held out her hand, as she said this; and, then, suddenly appearing to realize that Dunbar might not care to take it, was withdrawing it, when the young man grasped it cordially, holding it for a moment while he said: "Fortune has been kinder to me to-day, my friend, than ever before in my life. I have come into a large fortune most unexpectedly, and, I may say, undeservedly; as I had no part whatever in having earned it. Now, it would complete and crown the happiness of this day's experience to find someone to share it with me."

Here he released the young woman's hand, and taking his purse from his pocket, extracted from it a crisp ten

pound note, which, with the air of a person receiving rather than bestowing a favor, he handed her. The woman took it as if at first not realizing what he had given her; but as soon as she recovered from her first amazement at the graciousness as well as the magnitude of the gift, the effect was magical. She was a tall creature, perfectly formed according to the English conception of female beauty. She now drew herself up to her full height, as if at first inclined to resent the offer of such an important gift, and then suddenly changed her mind, as a perception of the great goodness and delicacy of the giver appeared to dawn upon her mind. At any rate she accepted it; and waiting for a moment, evidently afraid to trust her voice, in her effort to restrain her emotion, said: "Will you be good enough, sir, to let me know the name of the man to whose noble generosity I owe so much?"

"My name is Dunbar, Patrick Dunbar," said the young man modestly, "but I beg you not to consider this little matter in any other than its true light, which is, as I have already said, that of a favor conferred upon *me*. You have enabled me to complete the happiest day of my life in a manner the nearest approaching the way in which I could hope to complete it; that is, in adding to another's happiness; and I sincerely thank you."

"And you have opened my eyes, sir, to the realization of a fact which I had lost sight of entirely, of late, and that is that there is at least *one* true and noble heart in the world; one *man* whose generosity and delicacy raise that title far above any other that could possibly be conferred upon him. Let me take a good look at you, Patrick Dunbar; and do you take a good look at *me*, that we may know each other when we meet again; for the one prayer of my miserable life shall be from this time on that I may be near you in your day of trouble, not to repay the debt of

loyalty I owe you, for a noble nature like yours would never *consider* it a debt, or much less look for its payment; but that I may bless you, and watch over you, and protect you, possibly, when you least are conscious of it. Good night; but to meet again!"

Saying which, the woman stepped out upon the pavement, and the outline of her figure was soon lost in the fog as she proceeded on her way to her lonely habitation.

CHAPTER V.

Until the flying-machine, or some other means of aerial navigation shall have been perfected and come into general use, it is fairly safe to predict that human thought will continue to easily hold the record for rapid transit over long distances on or over the periphery of the globe. It is to become a traveling companion of the author's on one of these trips that an invitation is now extended to the reader who takes sufficient interest in our story to put up with the inconveniences of the voyage. Considering the capabilities of the vehicle in which we make the journey, which has been known to travel to the sun or to even the much more remote heavenly bodies, and back again before breakfast; our present trip will appear a very short one. We are bound, in fact, for New York; in the United States of America. So, *en voiture, messieurs, s'il vous plait*. Cast off the anchor hooks. Open the throttle. Let her go. *There*, thank you, the journey's over and here we are in New York; passengers all well, and a clean bill of health to show the health officer who comes aboard at Quarantine.

To those of our English passengers who are making the journey to the States for the first time, it is perhaps well to say that one's first impressions of New York are apt to be misleading, and that it will not be until after we have alighted at one of the really fine hotels to now be found in the town, removed the travel stains from our persons and clothing, partaken of one of the thoroughly good meals obtainable in the place, smoked a good cigar, and got rested

a little; that we shall begin to really appreciate the metropolis of the United States.

* * * * *

Some weeks after the events described in the last chapter, Helena Murphy and her mother were considerably surprised and not a little alarmed to hear a ring at their door-bell, about eight o'clock in the evening. That bell, it is safe to assert, had not been heard a half dozen times in the last half dozen years; and *never* in the evening. Since the death of her husband, Mrs. Murphy had practically given up all relations with the outside world. The house and grounds had been allowed to run to ruin. Servants had one by one been dismissed, until the number had at last reduced itself to an old married couple, who in the prosperous days of the family had filled respectively the positions of butler and cook. The place itself was remote from the thickly populated part of the town, and the house was remote from the entrance to the grounds; upon the old Bloomingdale road. In the day time, an air of opulence gone to decay pervaded everything. The lawn was rank and weedy. The paths were rough and grass-grown. The out-buildings had a dilapidated appearance in keeping with the fortunes of the family; which had long since been ruined beyond repair. At night, and especially a winter's night, as on the occasion of which we speak, a light fall of snow, while concealing some of the dismal features of the surroundings, brought others into fantastic prominence; and on the whole, a more dreary scene could hardly be imagined than that which greeted Mr. Thomas Moulton's eyes on his passage from the entrance gate to the house occupied by the widow and daughter of the late Clarence Murphy, Esquire, deceased.

Inside, the indications of respectable poverty were hardly less apparent. The carpets were worn to shreds and patches. The furniture was antiquated and broken. The

architecture of the house itself, relating as it did to the very ugliest period of house building in America, from an ill-favored childhood, had more than fulfilled its youthful promise by lapsing into a transcendently ugly and poverty-stricken old age.

"Are the ladies at home?" demanded the caller of the astonished old family retainer who answered the bell.

"They are, sor; but what name, please?"

"Moulton, Mr. Thomas Moulton; but wait a moment, I'll send in my card."

While the gentleman was getting at his card-case, the old servant was eyeing him suspiciously. "I'm thinking, sor," she hazarded, "that it would be important business that would bring anyone here at such an hour as this."

"It is important. Ah, here it is," said the gentleman, handing the old lady the card, and at the same time advancing as if to enter the door, which had as yet been opened just wide enough to admit of the interchange of the challenge of the sentinel on duty and the answer of the person challenged. "Here, what does this mean?" asked the gentleman, as the door was rudely shut in his face.

"You'll wait where ye are," answered the old woman to herself, as she trotted off with the card to summon the ladies. About as soon as the door was closed, however, it was re-opened by the young lady of the house, who had evidently been an unseen witness of all that had taken place. "I beg a thousand pardons, Mr. Moulton," she said, as she politely ushered the gentleman into the house, "we are so unaccustomed to receiving visitors that our servants have forgotten their manners. Walk in, sir, and take a seat in the library, if you please; while I call mamma."

The old servant, still somewhat undecided as to trusting a stranger under such suspicious circumstances, now entered the room to turn up the gas, and stir the fire. This she did so leisurely as to occupy the whole of the time in-

tervening between the exit of Miss Helena Murphy and the entrance of that young lady accompanied by her mother. After an exchange of the usual courtesies, the final departure of the servant, and the closing of the door, Mr. Moulton cleared his voice, and assuming a judicial air, began to explain to the ladies the nature of the business which had brought him to their house:

"I have received a communication from our friends in London," he began, "ahem, Messrs. Griggs and Dobson, solicitors, of Gray's Inn, announcing the fact of their having discovered the heir of the late Patrick Dunbar."

Here the old gentleman paused a moment, to watch the effect of this important declaration upon his audience. As far as the younger lady was concerned, he looked in vain. She had been as unmoved as a marble statue before the announcement; she remained so after it. With the older lady it was different. A look of disappointment came into her eyes; as if one more hope, the last one, had been taken out of her life.

"Not only," Mr. Moulton went on, "have they found the heir; but they have found the will also. Further than this, the young man, a nephew of the late Patrick Dunbar, and of the same name, has produced a letter of his uncle's referring to transactions between him and your late husband, Mrs. Murphy, mentioning his name, and speaking of matters well within my own knowledge and memory, as his lawyer. In fact, as far as I can see, every possible point in the chain of evidence going to prove the legitimacy of the young man's claim to the estate seems to have been fully covered; and I see no other course left open for us to pursue than to hand over the property to the claimant."

"Well, God's will be done," said the widow. "Although it takes the roof from over the heads of two lonely women, I am glad the true heir has been found. What is the next step to be taken, Mr. Moulton?"

"Some legal formalities have still to be gone through with, my dear Mrs. Murphy; and, dealing as we have the good fortune to do, with people, ahem, of the very highest standing in London, I can assure you that every courtesy and consideration will be extended to yourself and Miss Helena, and your convenience studied in every way."

"As the blow has fallen at last, mamma," said Helena, quietly, "we may as well bow before it now as at any other time; and I, for one, should prefer moving out of this gloomy old place at once, and giving it up to its proper owners."

"Yes, I know, Helena," said the widow, sadly, "young people break away from past associations more easily than we old ones do; but, perhaps you are right."

"There is a postscript or additional clause to the letter I have received," broke in Mr. Moulton just here, "which expresses the deep concern of the heir, Mr. Patrick Dunbar, at any inconvenience he may cause you by reason of his coming into his property, and a request that you will accept a sufficient sum from the estate, before handing it over to him, to render both of you ladies comfortable for life. But, as a person cannot very well give away what he has not yet received, and, as this may be only a polite way of easing his conscience in taking from you an estate you could so easily have appropriated to your own use, I fear we can hardly count upon it as being of any practical assistance to us."

"Not one cent of it for me," said Helena, proudly. "I had rather starve first."

"Don't say that, my dear," said her mother, "it was kindly meant, this offer, I feel perfectly sure; and we can hardly afford to be proud, situated as we are."

"I can," returned the young lady. "I can work to support us both, as long as I have my health and strength; and

I should far rather work than to be beholden to this young man; this Patrick Dunbar."

"Well," said Mr. Moulton, "as the home you now occupy could only be taken away from you in order to make good a deficiency, and as the deficiency could only be ascertained as the result of a long and involved investigation of the estate accounts, I think we may leave that matter for future discussion. In the meantime, of course, you can gain time, and probably a good deal of time, in handing over the estate, if so disposed, by putting the claimant to the strictest legal proof. In such a case, a suit would have to be begun to dispossess you, interrogatories filed, commissioners appointed to take testimony, witnesses looked up and examined, the genuineness of signatures ascertained, and a thousand and one legal obstructions overcome; which, considering all the circumstances of the case, would of necessity take much time and call for the expenditure of a vast amount of money on the part of the claimant."

"And on ours, as well?" suggested the widow.

"Undoubtedly, Mrs. Murphy. You can neither bring nor defend law suits without money. Of course, one way to effect an amicable settlement, which might have the result of leaving yourself and Miss Murphy in possession of a good slice of the estate, would be to threaten to stand suit. But, as the claimant frankly and freely offers you this substantial slice of the property before such a course on your part has even been hinted at, it would hardly appear either necessary or wise to adopt it."

"You have no possible doubt in your own mind as to the justice of this young man's claim, have you?" asked Helena.

"Not the slightest; Miss Murphy."

"And a suit brought against my mother and myself would prevail in due time."

"In my opinion, yes; beyond a doubt."

"What was it you said just now about the young man's

being unable to give away what he had not already received?"

"Simply, that to act upon his undoubtedly well-meant instructions to *retain* a sufficient part of the estate to make you ladies comfortable would not be the way in which we lawyers would go to work in such a matter. We are compelled to construe such requests in a legal way; for the protection of all parties. It would complicate to an eminent degree the settlement of this present matter, for instance, for us to endeavor to literally carry out such a program. There is an as yet undecided question whether or no your late father died owing his former partner money. In order to settle the matter, a huge amount of investigation must be had; investigation which, after the long lapse of time that has intervened, would be extremely difficult and expensive. After the matter had been settled, one way or the other, and the estate, plus or minus the possible deficiency, handed over to the claimant, then, he, the claimant, if he had not changed his mind in the mean time, might return you and your mother as much or as little of the estate as he saw fit. Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Moulton; but, supposing for the sake of argument, that my mother and I saw fit to do as she just now suggested, that is, to put our pride in our pocket and accept the young man's offer, how would the matter be brought about to overcome all the objections you have just stated?"

"Simply by requesting him, through his lawyers, to legally waive any right to an accounting of any kind, and to accept the estate just as you and your mother hand it over to him. All this would have to be reduced to writing, of course, and witnessed before the proper authorities in England, and the agreement, or a certified copy of it, filed both here and in London. All of this could undoubtedly be accomplished, if the claimant earnestly means what he

says. If, as I have my suspicions, he does *not* exactly mean what he says, why then any request on our parts to have him put his polite and kind offer into legal form could only excite both his and his lawyers' suspicions that we have something to conceal; or, that, in other words, we had reason to fear an investigation; which is *not* the case."

"I see," said Helena. "It appears to resolve itself into a question of what kind of a young man this Patrick Dunbar is."

"Precisely, Miss Helena."

"And, I suppose you really know nothing whatever about him, except what these London lawyers say about him. What *do* they say, by the way?"

"Absolutely nothing; except as to the carrying out of his wishes in regard to delivering his message to you. If you wish the exact words I will read them to you." Here the old gentleman adjusted his glasses, took a letter from his pocket, and taking it to the light, read as follows; "Mr. Patrick Dunbar charges us with a message to your clients which we endeavor to transcribe as nearly as possible in his own words; he says: "please convey to those brave ladies in New York my most respectful salutations, and say to them that I absolutely refuse to accept the inheritance which seems to be mine by right, until their wants have been fully and amply provided for; and I am sure that my mother and sisters will take the same view of the matter."

"Ah, and here is something I have overlooked," said the lawyer, carefully studying the letter, "and that I will cheerfully sign any paper, or take any action to carry out this end."

"Ahem," said the old fellow, removing his glasses, and folding up the letter. This alters the case materially. It seems he *is* willing, or says he is, to execute the proper

papers. Well, we'll put him to the test; that's all. Leave this matter to me, ladies, and hope for the best."

At this, as the hour was getting late, Mr. Moulton said good evening to Mrs. Murphy and Helena, and took his departure.

* * * * *

When the two parties to a controversy are inclined to be perfectly fair and reasonable in their demands, the task of bringing about an accommodation is an easy one. Where both parties are not only reasonable, but generous; the task becomes a pleasure. So it was in the present instance. The disinterested nobility of Helena and her mother, in the first instance, had acted upon the nobility inherent in our young friend, Patrick Dunbar, which in time had reacted upon and influenced every move that was made from his side of the controversy, to such an extent that at times the settlement was in apparent danger of falling to the ground, not from the excess of his solicitude for his *own* interests, but for those of the brave women who had been willing to give up the very roof that sheltered them in their desire to see him come by his own. In a surprisingly short time, therefore, considering the difficulties which might easily have attended the settlement, the estate was handed over to Dunbar's solicitors in London; while the old homestead, together with an income quite sufficient for their modest wants, was settled upon Mrs. and Miss Murphy. Everyone appeared to be satisfied with the turn matters had taken from the start; Dunbar and his family, because they were elevated by it from comparative poverty to opulence; Mrs. Murphy and Helena, because, from uncertainty and fear for the future, they now were possessed of a certain provision for their lives; Dobson, because he now had a very large estate in his hands, which it would be his own fault if he didn't keep there to his own advantage for many years to come; Moulton, because he was sincerely glad to

see the widow and daughter of a very worthy man so comfortably provided for; and, finally, Gow, who, for reasons of his own, was satisfied with what had been and was likely to be his share of the windfall so providentially thrown in his way.

And now, having despatched the business which took us to New York, to our entire satisfaction, we will, allowing time, of course, for the reader to pack his or her belongings and say good-by to the friends made in New York, take shipping again and return to dear old London.

* * * * *

After coming into his estate, Patrick Dunbar did a very sensible thing: he immediately retired from business. He had seen, even in his short business career, enough of the pitfalls of commercial life in the City of London to firmly impress it upon his mind that now, being more than comfortably situated in the world, he had better keep out of it. So, he directed his solicitors to look out for good investments for his loose money, to keep him at all times informed as to the state of his affairs, and, finally, to keep their eyes open for the purchase of a fine estate in the country. The solicitors were Messrs. Griggs and Dobson.

In due time, these gentlemen found a property in Devonshire which seemed to answer all the requirements. Dunbar accompanied by his mother and sisters, Alice and Mary, went down to see it. They all approving, it was purchased; and the family took possession. Then came a period when Dunbar was fascinated with the occupation of improving his country seat. He went at it with a lavish hand, and in time made it an earthly paradise. As time went on, he heard from his New York agents that his lands in that city had been and were rapidly increasing in value. So much so, indeed, that soon his income mounted from about thirty to about fifty thousand pounds. He then purchased a house in town, whither he and his family resorted for the

season; and, on the whole, matters could be said to be going very prosperously with Patrick Dunbar.

There is a certain interdependence in human affairs, by reason of which when one of us is prosperous, our neighbor, in a greater or less degree, gets a benefit from it. A prosperous community is the aggregate of a number of prosperous individuals. My needs become your opportunity to supply those needs, and to prosper in doing so. All this is doubtless as it should be in social economics; but it is quite another matter to have a person or a number of persons living upon you unknown to you, and without giving any return for it. This is called in America "having a side partner." Our friend, Patrick Dunbar had had, from the moment of his having spoken of his affairs relating to his American estate, a "side," or an unknown partner; and his name was Gow.

We have already seen how this astute young man had put five thousand pounds into his pocket as a result of his having promised his influence in keeping Dunbar's estate in Dobson's hands. With this transaction as a departure, Gow had gone on rapidly increasing the already large aggregate of his indebtedness on bills of exchange. He had made it already appear to Dobson's advantage for the latter to see the manager of his Bank, Brown, and speak a good word for him. As he could do this both from conviction and because it was now of the greatest importance to himself to have Gow stand well with his Bankers, he had called upon Brown and confided to him what a valuable man Gow could be made to both of them by reason of the influence he undoubtedly possessed over Patrick Dunbar. So impressed had Brown become by what Dobson had said, that he practically now threw prudence to the winds, and began to discount for Gow upon a much larger scale than ever before.

Now, although Gow was not by any means a farmer, one apothegm appertaining to the agricultural interest had deeply and duly impressed itself upon his mind; and that was the advisability of making hay while the sun shone. Carrying this beautiful rule of action from the harvest-field to the counting house, he now not only harvested the land he had so assiduously tilled, but he began to look about him for new fields to, in due order, plough, plant and garner. To begin with, he had by no means cultivated the Dobson field to what he considered its full capacity. Having shared so much of Dobson's confidence, it was easy to go on sharing it; and, as each event took place which brought the final consummation so devoutly wished by Dobson and himself to a successful issue, Gow not only knew of it, but knew how to use it in furthering his own ends. When finally the estate had been handed over to Griggs and Dobson, and a very large sum of ready money on Dunbar's account had come into their hands, his rapacity knew no bounds. Feeling perfectly safe now in urging demands which he knew Dobson was in no position to refuse, he practically was doing as he chose with Dunbar's money, while making Dobson responsible for the consequences; or fully intending to do so. He was, in a word, Dunbar's "side" partner.

Such relations as these exist between custodians of other people's money in all the large money centres of the world. There is nothing new in it. It has been going on ever since money came into use. One class of men made it, another class took care of it for the first class; and still a *third* class, the speculators, generally succeeded in getting it from both the other two classes; and, ultimately, in losing it. The result of all this, as far as Gow was concerned, was that that young man was living in clover. Having no family, he required no very large establishment; but he had of late developed tastes which

called for quite as large an expenditure as a town and country house and all that they implied could have done. He went in for horses, women, and gambling; each and every one of them a sea in which a fortune a day could easily be swallowed up; and yet he kept them all three busily employed in swallowing at once.

Gow's pace had become so rapid by this time, and his air and manner so visibly affected by it, that Dunbar, who for a long time had begun to have misgivings about the life he led, had now come to openly distrusting him, and to objecting to him for a companion; while Gow, on his side, either because his guilty conscience made it impossible for him to enjoy the society of the man he was robbing, or because he found Dunbar altogether too slow for the pace he was keeping up, gradually sought other and much less desirable companions.

CHAPTER VI.

Some two years after Patrick Dunbar came into his property, he was about to enter his house, one evening, when a woman who had evidently been waiting for the purpose, accosted him. At a glance, he recognized in her the poor creature he had once assisted, as narrated in a preceding chapter.

"May I say a word to you, sir?" she asked respectfully.

"Certainly you may," responded Dunbar. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"No, nothing; but there is something *I* can do for you. You don't remember me, I dare say, but I remember you; and the time has come when I can repay the kindness you rendered me some years ago. But perhaps you would hardly care to be seen talking to me here?"

Dunbar's house was in Portland Place. It was but a step to Regents' Park. There being an earnestness in the woman's manner which excited his curiosity, as well as from his natural courtesy, he wished to hear what she had to say. So he suggested that they take a turn in the park. It was in the early summer, and although the day was closing in, there was sufficient light remaining in which to carefully scrutinize the features of the woman walking by his side. She was dressed as when he had last seen her, modestly, had a retiring, almost diffident manner, which only seemed to assert itself at the call of some strongly impelling motive. Making due allowance for the time which had elapsed since he had last seen her, she had

aged out of proportion to it. She had a troubled and careworn look in her face, as if the world had fared but indifferently with her; but, for all that, there were still remaining traces, not only of beauty, but of a sensitive refinement which stamped her indelibly as a woman of gentle birth. Selecting a path in which they were hardly likely to be disturbed, Dunbar now listened to what she had to say.

“You remember, sir, that you gave me your name at my request, when last we met. I felt at the time one of those premonitions, or call them what you will, which told me we should meet again. London is a big place; but certain circles in it are very small, so small, in fact, that an item of news or of scandal repeated at one part of it very soon gets round to where it started from. A short time ago, in a certain company, names need not be mentioned just yet, I heard *your* name spoken: Patrick Dunbar. The speaker was a man I knew, and had every reason to know as one of the cruelest, most heartless scoundrels in London; and that is saying a good deal. The man did not suspect my presence, and spoke freely. He could not by any possibility have known of any interest I might have in you, in any case. He spoke of your having lately come into a large property. This I already knew, as you had told me of it; but he went on to divulge what appeared to me to be the most bare-faced and shameful conspiracy to rob you of all of it that could be got at. He spoke of having a solicitor by the name of Dobson in his power; and, from what I was able to gather, this solicitor had some hold upon you, or had charge of some of your property. This part of the conversation I could neither hear nor understand, as well as the rest; but from what I could hear, I should say that the solicitor was as great a rascal as the speaker, and more than that, that he was in a very bad way himself. The general plan of the

conspiracy seemed to be to get this man Dobson to lend himself to some bill transactions by means of which all the parties to them should indirectly profit, while *you* would ultimately be compelled to stand the loss. In fact, from what was said, I should say that already matters had progressed so far that a crisis was likely to occur at almost any time; the scheme which I heard discussed being in the nature of an expedient for postponing it if possible, or of availing of it to the very fullest extent, if not. Now, sir, although my information is somewhat fragmentary, and, being a woman and unacquainted with business terms, I may have been unable to convey a correct or clear account of what I have heard, I am fully convinced that you are in great danger of being heavily involved in financial transactions of which you know nothing, and with a set of men who are certain to rob you, if they can."

As the woman proceeded with her story, Dunbar could not help being impressed with the evident sincerity and truthfulness of what she had said. There was no effort at exaggeration, and an absence of any attempt at dramatic effect which was especially convincing. Then again, she had mentioned the name of his solicitor. She could not by any means have *imagined* that piece of corroborative evidence. She went on:

"As soon as I heard all this, I determined to warn you at any cost. I should have preferred to do so by some other means than that which I have adopted; but, if I have done wrong, I trust you will forgive me. I did not wish to entrust so important a matter as this to paper; *and*, I did not wish to waste any time."

"When did all this occur?" asked Dunbar.

"Three days ago. I spent a day or two in finding your address, and in deciding as to the best means of reaching you."

Dunbar was silent for a few moments, as if determining what steps it was desirable to take; and, incidentally, how far it was either dignified or safe to discuss his private affairs with a stranger. There was something, however, in the woman's voice and manner so suggestive of loyalty, of gratitude, of entire faith in him and his interpretation of her attitude towards him, that he was completely disarmed. Then again, the remembrance of his last interview with this woman was fresh in his mind, and how she had insisted upon taking a good look at him in order that she might know him again. Unconsciously to himself, perhaps, all this had had a deep effect upon him; as such things often do. Then, there was something in the woman herself that interested him. There was a story, a sad one, beyond a doubt, connected with her life. Her whole attitude negated any possible assumption that she had come to him in *forma pauperis*. That she had his good at heart, and that he stood in some great danger had become perfectly clear to him; the question was how to proceed, and as to whether or no the services of this woman would be the best means to employ in protecting himself against his secret enemies.

"You still wish to keep the name of the principal conspirator a secret?" he asked.

"I should prefer to; yes." answered the woman, coloring perceptibly, as if Dunbar had touched upon a sore spot in her consciousness. "And my reason for doing so is this": she went on, "Supposing by any remote chance I have made a mistake, or have been intentionally misled, for some purpose of which I am ignorant, the matter need go no farther than it has; and I shall not have opened up a tale of injustice and cruelty relating to myself alone, long since set at rest. Once having connected any names with the affair, it would be impossible either to recall them, or to resist the logical sequence of going on and relating

the circumstances under which I came to know the man whose name you wish me to disclose; all of which I should prefer to avoid."

"Yes, but how am I to protect myself against enemies whose names I do not even know?"

"It seems to me, sir, that you could commence with the man whose name I have given you, Mr. Dobson. Do you know him, and have you any relations with him?"

"Unfortunately, yes. He's my solicitor."

"He is?" asked the woman in evident alarm, "Then, sir, you may rest assured that if so much of the information is correct, the rest is."

"If I will mention the name of the person you consider to be the arch conspirator, will you tell me whether I am right or wrong?" asked Dunbar.

The woman hesitated a few moments, as if struggling against a strong impulse of some kind; but finally answered: "Yes, on one condition; and that is, that for the present, at least, you will not ask me how I came to know this man."

"I consent to your condition, of course. I have no possible right or inclination to pry into your private affairs. Is the man's name Sidney Gow?"

"Yes," said the woman, with a frightened look, as if in speaking that one little word she had closed the door for any possibility of a retreat behind her.

"I thought so," said Dunbar, quietly. "And now, my friend, he went on impressively, "as you neither give me nor do I ask you for any other name by which to call you, fate seems to have thrown us together at an opportune time. I have suspected for a long time that things were not altogether right with my friend Gow. What you have said confirms my suspicions. You have proved your friendship by coming to warn me of this danger, and I am going to confide in you. I am afraid that by going to Dobson

and demanding an explanation from him, armed with the very slender evidence I have in my possession at present, I should only put all of these conspirators on their guard, and precipitate the very crisis we are anxious to avert. Now, what would be *your* way of going to work at this matter?"

"I am only a woman, sir, and any advice I can give you will be only a woman's way of looking at an affair which concerns men alone; and, for that reason, of, I fear, very little value. I should take a woman's way of coming at the facts in this case, just as I have already done. It may be beneath your dignity as a man to put yourself in a position to overhear a conversation between men who are engaged in plotting your destruction. It would *not* be beneath mine."

"Yes, but how could I manage this part of your plan, supposing I was inclined to follow your advice?"

"If you wish to be placed in a position to hear this conspiracy discussed in all its details, I think I can find you the opportunity. I know the haunts of these men pretty well. They will in all probability meet this very evening at a small Italian eating-house near Leicester Square. It is an unknown place amongst the majority of the fashionable men of the town, but noted amongst a certain set for its good Italian cooking; and especially for its Italian wines. As the dining room is arranged in alcoves, as many of the older fashioned London eating-houses are, it would be a comparatively easy matter to secure the compartment next to the one these men generally occupy. It was at this place, and in this manner that I learned the facts I have already revealed to you."

Dunbar looked at his watch. It was about seven o'clock. His own dinner would be served at half-past seven; thus allowing him ample time to go home and excuse himself to his family, and then take a cab to Leicester Square. But

there were difficulties in the way. In the first place, he was well-known to Gow; and to go to the place in *propria persona* would be to defeat the very object he had in view. Then to go alone would be almost equally futile, as he was unacquainted with the surroundings, and would be unable to so place himself in the compartment as to accomplish his purpose. Besides these objections was the natural repugnance which an honorable man would feel at playing the part of eavesdropper, even as a means of saving himself from an impending danger. While all these thoughts were rapidly passing through his mind, the woman was critically watching him, as if with no very great difficulty reading what was going on in his mind. At last, she spoke:

“Don’t let me influence you in this matter, sir; but, for future guidance in case you *do* wish to avail yourself of the information I have given, or rather, to add to it by your own personal observation, let me give you the name and address of the restaurant at which these men meet. It may be of service to you in more ways than one.”

Here she asked Dunbar for his note-book, in which she carefully inscribed not only the address of the eating-house in question, but made a rough diagram of the place, by means of which he could easily secure a position from which a conversation in a certain alcove could be overheard. As an additional precaution, she also gave an address which would always find her, and appointed the eating-house in Leicester Square as a permanent rendezvous, in case for any reason she considered it important to see Dunbar; in which case a wire, with the simple word “Come,” was to indicate that she would be found at this place within a hour or so after his probable receipt of the telegram. After making this arrangement, she was about to take her departure, when Dunbar took his purse from his pocket; and, with as much delicacy as such an offer

could possibly be made, asked the woman if she stood in need of money. Her reply was, as on the occasion of their former meeting, at first, an indignant look, which soon changed into an expression of sorrow, as she said: "No; at present I want for nothing; and I came to *give* you information, not to sell it."

Then, before Dunbar could protest, she had turned and was walking rapidly toward the exit from the park, which, as Dunbar followed her, was now being closed for the night. Dunbar hailed a cab, and requesting the driver to pull up at his house in Portland Place for a moment, notified his family that he should not be home for dinner; and then re-embarking in his cab, proceeded down Portland Place and Regent Street in the direction of Leicester Square. Not having seen or been seen by Gow for some time, and being now in a part of the town in which the latter would hardly be on the lookout for him, Dunbar had intended to enter the eating-house in question, secure the alcove he wanted and begin his dinner before the men whose conversation was likely to prove interesting to him had arrived. But, in passing the top of the Haymarket, his eye fell upon a small costumer's shop, and the idea occurred to enter the place for the purpose of obtaining some slight disguise. So, he stopped the driver, and alighting from his cab, paid and dismissed the man, saying that he would walk the rest of the way. When the man was out of sight he went into the shop, with considerable reluctance, as if he were playing a part entirely new to him, and one for which he had no relish. The proprietor, a fussy, important, little man, came forward to ask him how he could serve.

"I am looking for a slight disguise; something just enough to change my appearance sufficiently to escape the attention of a person who is familiar with my ordinary

appearance, but who is *not* expecting to see me," said Dunbar.

The man looked at him half suspiciously, with an air as much as to say: "I've heard that story before"; but answered, "Ah, yes, sir, a moustache would answer the purpose, I think. This way, sir, if you please." And he conducted him into a small room at the rear of the shop, where, in glass cases and hung upon the walls, were all kinds of false whiskers, moustaches, monocles, walking sticks, imitation jewelry, hats, caps, mufflers, various costumes, military uniforms, and even a policeman's tunic and helmet. Requesting Dunbar to take a chair before a mirror, he deftly rearranged his hair and touched up his face with a little paint, so as in an incredibly short time to very materially change his appearance; and then, carefully selecting a moustache from the glass case, adjusted it upon the young man's face. Then, he untied Dunbar's neckwear and completely rearranged it, in the twinkling of an eye. Last of all, he took from the case a monocle, and requesting Dunbar to put it into his eye, motioned him to look at himself in the glass. The effect was magical. Dunbar hardly recognized himself. Then, the man, who was evidently an artist in his way, showed him how to carry himself to suit his changed appearance, and the transformation was complete. "There, sir, that will do for anything in the way of *light* disguise, and in dealing with anyone but an expert in such matters, or a person who is really looking for you. In many cases, even then, sir, a slight disguise is better than an elaborate one; as an expert is generally expecting a man who isn't an expert to overdo the matter. If you should ever require anything in our line, ahem, a little more complete, sir; we shall be glad to serve you. Two guineas, sir; if you please."

Dunbar paid the money, feeling that it had been well earned; and left the shop. To Leicester Square was but

a step, and he entered the eating-house just as the church bell of St. Martin in the Fields was striking eight o'clock. The place was filling up; but Dunbar, while appearing to be selecting an alcove to his liking, had an opportunity of finding out by a careful inspection of the place that the one which he understood was usually reserved for Gow and his friends was still unoccupied; as was the one adjoining it. He took a seat in the latter and occupied himself with looking over the evening paper until the waiter should come to take his order. Almost immediately, a man who was a stranger to him came and took possession of Gow's alcove. Although Dunbar had not been able to take a good look at him, he thought he was a young lord Vennor, whom Gow had once pointed out to him as being a friend of his.

The waiter now made his appearance, and Dunbar gave his order. Hardly had the man gone to execute it, when Gow entered the room. Dunbar's seat commanded the front door, and now he waited to see what Gow would do. Feeling pretty confident in his disguise, he took no especial pains to conceal himself, as he might have done by pretending to be absorbed in his newspaper. So, as Gow, passed his alcove, he returned the rather ill-bred and searching glance his former friend gave him, and not a sign of recognition appeared upon Gow's face.

"Hello, Vennor," he heard Gow say, carelessly, as he took his seat, "been here long?"

"No, just sat down. I didn't order until you came, so let's call the waiter."

This was done, and a very elaborate order given. By this time Dunbar's dinner was before him, and he began his repast. He listened to a few commonplaces between the men in the box next his own, until the waiter had finally disappeared, and then Gow said: "And now, my lord, to business. We've got to act quickly and be damned sharp

in every way, or we'll lose the trick. Dobson's turning very crusty."

"Ah," responded Gow's friend, "what's up?"

"Well, to begin with, Dobson says Dunbar's beginning to ask altogether too many questions about his affairs. Of course, it may be his own guilty conscience that accuses him, but he thinks not. You see, Dunbar's one of those methodical fellows who wants to know the reason for everything. Has a great idea of his business ability, just because he was brought up in a city stock-broker's office. Talks of making his own investments after this, and all that sort of thing. Dobson says the next thing he'll ask will be for an accounting, and then the fat will be in the fire, for you and I know pretty well what has become of all of Dunbar's loose money; and, if I'm not mistaken, of a lot of his securities as well."

"Yes," said Vennor, "I think we know something about *that*; but what's the plan of campaign?" I'm absolutely full up at my Bankers. I couldn't get another bill done if it were endorsed, well, by any one the least likely to endorse it. You tell me you are in about the same fix; so what's to be done?"

"I've been thinking it all over, Vennor; and there's only one thing to relieve the situation, and that is, Dobson must take the remaining securities of Dunbar's he has in his hands, and make a loan upon them; trusting to luck to some day being able to replace them when times get better; which they're sure to do, I tell him. Now, naturally, Dobson don't like to do this, as he says he may be called upon for an accounting at any moment. I suggested his accepting some more bills, but he says his name has been so blown upon by this time that they could not be discounted anywhere, except at the very highest Jew rates, which would be injurious, if it got noised about."

"Well, what does he propose?"

"Up to this time, he absolutely refuses to dip into Dunbar's securities to the extent of another penny; but whether it is that he wants them for his own use, and doesn't propose to let *us* have any benefit from them, isn't quite so clear. At any rate, I hold the whip end with him, and he knows it. I have threatened to put Dunbar on his track, if he doesn't disgorge; which, of course, I shouldn't do; but it may produce the desired effect to hold the threat over him."

"I'm afraid Dobson's too tough an old bird to be easily frightened, Gow."

"Perhaps so; but, at any rate, matters can't go on as they are going now for much longer. My Bankers have absolutely refused to renew another bill for me. Dobson can't help me, as he's in a worse hole than I'm in; and *you* are at the end of your rope also, as far as I can see. I tell you, Vennor, we're on the edge of a crisis; and something's got to be done, or we'll all be in Queer street together."

"It's well enough to say over and over again, 'Something's got to be done'; but for God's sake, man, give us an idea, and we'll put our heads together and see if it can be carried out. I'm desperate, I'm willing to admit; and I'll do anything in reason, or *out* of reason, to get out of the position I'm in."

Then followed a conversation in so low a key that Dunbar was unable to hear distinctly what was said, although he felt certain he heard his own name mentioned several times. At last, feeling that he had heard all he was likely to hear, and not caring to run any possible risk of another scrutinizing gaze from Gow, he rang for the waiter, paid his bill, and passed out into the street.

It being still early in the evening, Dunbar set out to walk home. His route led him through Piccadilly Circus and up Regent Street. As he passed along through the

busy throng of night hawks of both sexes that infest that vicinity during the early hours of the evening, he was too intent upon his own affairs to be much interested in what was going on about him. To a man, and especially a young man, one unaccustomed to the shifty methods to which desperate men resort to make a living, all he had heard this evening, beginning with the warning of the mysterious woman, and ending with what he had been a witness to at the eating-house, came as a revelation almost too improbable to be true. But, unfortunately, a man cannot impeach the credibility of his own senses, and he had both heard and seen enough to convince him that he stood upon the very edge of a serious disaster. Just how to act; or where or when to begin to act, he could hardly make up his mind. The crisis had come upon him too suddenly to permit a free and unembarrassed action of the mind. He felt a sense of mental numbness quite to be expected on the part of an inexperienced man unexpectedly called upon to face an emergency which would put to the severest test the courage and diplomacy of a veteran. The first steps seemed to be to prevent Dobson from playing any further havoc with his money and valuable securities; but how to effectually accomplish this, was by no means a question easy of solution. Should he call upon him, take him by surprise the next morning, and demand a settlement and the restoration of his property already misappropriated, or should he send a lawyer? If the latter, whom should he send? A simple-minded, honest young fellow like himself had no acquaintance amongst the legal profession, what need had he of such a connection? London solicitors, the good ones, are somewhat difficult of approach. You cannot rush wildly into the first office over which you see the word "Solicitor" written, and lay your case before him. If he is a man whom it would be safe for you to trust, he demands to know whether it is safe to trust *you*; and he

requires an introduction. The man to whom Dunbar would naturally apply for such an introduction had now become his most dangerous enemy; Gow, the man who had introduced him to Dobson; who had turned out the shadiest of shady solicitors. No, *that* plan would not answer. No more solicitors for *him*, until they had been weighed in the balance and found reliable; but all this was a matter of time, and of much more time than he had to spare. What should he do?

As he slowly turned into Regent Street, with his head bowed as if in deep meditation, and paying no more attention to passers-by than was required to avoid running against them, he suddenly became conscious of a man's evidently being attracted by his appearance, and then carelessly approaching him, as if endeavoring to either confirm or dispel a first impression he had received as to his identity. The incident was over in an instant; as the man, whoever he was, having taken another rather furtive look at Dunbar—without the slightest sign of recognition, or indeed of interest of any kind, fell behind him and was soon lost in the crowd. But, as Dunbar passed Oxford Circus, and came to the upper portion of Regent Street, where the crowd was much less dense, he was somewhat surprised to catch an instantaneous glimpse of the man, as he crossed over from the east to west side of the street. The idea that he was being followed did not occur to him even then; but his attention was put upon the alert; and, in the deep shadows of the Langham Hotel, as he turned into Portland Place, he partly turned his head and became satisfied now that for some unknown reason his newly acquired friend took a deep personal interest in him, which he was determined to follow up. Disquieting as all this might have proved to a man of evil conscience, it produced no further effect upon our honest young friend than any trivial street incident in which he was indirectly interested might have

had. In fact, he was far too much engrossed in his own affairs just then to have paid any especial attention to *any* incident of less proportions than one threatening injury to life or limb, as he proceeded on his way. Portland Place being an almost deserted street for pedestrians at night, it became a matter of much greater difficulty, evidently, for his unknown friend to follow him without being seen. At any rate, Dunbar was dimly conscious of the man's suddenly disappearing at intervals beneath the dark shadows of the buildings, and of his emerging again, as if fearful of losing the object of his pursuit by allowing too much space to intervene between them. As Dunbar lived pretty well at the head of the street nearest Regent's Park, this kind of manoeuvre went on until he had become quite interested in the adventure and determined to see it out.

Arriving at last at his own house, he put his hand into his pocket to take out his latch-key, at the same time turning his head to ascertain the position of his follower. To his surprise, the man was close behind him; and, as he slipped the key into the keyhole, he stepped briskly forward, and laying his hand upon his arm in no gentle manner, said in a half triumphant, half cynical voice: "Aha, Mr. Colfax, alias Dutton, alias Hewitt, alias God know's what; I've caught you at last. You *would* keep at it until you were bowled over, wouldn't you? Now, come along with me; the more quietly the better for all parties. Come along, I say."

The latter request was made to induce Dunbar to do what just then he appeared to have the least intention in the world of doing; namely, to accompany his somewhat obtrusive friend.

"Is this a practical joke you are playing upon me?" he asked.

"Well, upon my word, you are a cool hand; Colfax," said the man, tightening his grasp upon Dunbar's arm with

one hand, while with the disengaged hand he suddenly seized his bunch of keys, and put them into his own pocket. This was quite a little too much over the punishable line of even a practical joke; and Dunbar, being no coward, struck the man violently in the face. The blow would undoubtedly have stunned the man if he had not been on the look out for it; but, as it was, he partly avoided it, and now seized Dunbar with a strength and adroitness which left no possible doubt as to the fact that he was within the power of an officer of the law.

"You shall pay dearly for that, my man," said the detective, dragging him roughly from his own doorstep into the street. "And now, take my advice and come with me quietly; as neither you nor I shall gain anything by making a scene."

"I still don't know what you want with me," said Dunbar, more quietly, but with firmness, "but this I tell you, if you are an officer of any kind, I shall make you pay far more dearly than you will make me, for this little pleasantry of yours. And now, give me back my keys and do not obstruct my passage into my own house a moment longer; or you do so at your peril."

The man's answer to this challenge was to approach the door and violently pull the door bell; tightly holding Dunbar by the arm as he did so. When the butler opened the door, the detective asked him: "Do you know this man? I'm an inspector from Scotland Yard."

"Never saw him before in my life, sir," answered the butler, slamming the door most unceremoniously in his master's face.

Dunbar had completely forgotten his disguise.

CHAPTER VII.

Although the saying: "One half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives," is trite enough to be true; there are certain phases of the life of the half of the world opposed to our own which one could hardly be expected to know. For a perfectly innocent and right minded man to suddenly find himself within the clutches of the law, is one of them. The first impression upon Dunbar's mind, as he came to a realization of the predicament he was in, was the humor of it all. To be arrested as he was entering his own house, to be denied by his own servant, and to be carried off to a police station upon a probable charge of attempted burglary upon his own premises; under slightly different conditions, would have been distinctly humorous, no doubt; but, in the present instance, there were two considerations which rendered his present position rather awkward; first, he was in a disguise, the reason for which it would be somewhat difficult to satisfactorily explain; and second, in the present state of his affairs any delay was particularly inopportune. There is, however, in human nature at large, and there certainly was in Dunbar's nature, a sense of injustice at being falsely accused, which easily leads the victim of such an unfortunate circumstance into a sulky or defiant attitude which is calculated to inflame rather than to subdue the intensity of the ordeal through which he is called upon to pass. Feeling perfectly secure in the conviction that in the end the mistaken identity which had led to his arrest would

be discovered, and the whole matter set right; and, at the same time, both from motives of pride, and because he did not care at present to explain the motives for his disguise, Dunbar made up his mind as he walked along with the officer to the police station to maintain the position of indignation and injured innocence he had inaugurated in his first encounter with the man. He had just arrived at this conclusion as they entered the police station in Portland Street.

Here he was searched and all his belongings taken from him, his height and weight were taken; *and* he was formally charged, as he had expected to be, with an attempt at burglary.

"What's your name?" asked the sergeant, gruffly.

"As our friend here has already given me several names which don't belong to me," answered Dunbar, moodily, "you may select any one of them you like best. I shall not help you out."

"Um," said the sergeant, "inclined to be uppish, I see. Well then, what's your address; if you have any?"

"I supposed I lived in Portland Place; but as your highly intelligent agent here appears to object to my living there, why there's nothing left for me to do but to move out; as far as I can see."

"In other words, you decline to answer my questions?" asked the sergeant.

"I certainly refuse to go on supplying you with information which you decline to accept as information; yes," replied Dunbar.

"Very well, my man; then there's very little use in our going any further this evening. Take him away, Jones. By the way," to Dunbar, "do you wish to send for any one? Your solicitor, for instance?"

"No, not tonight."

Then he was taken to a very uncomfortable looking cell,

and locked up for the night. At first the unfortunate young man was so oppressed with a sense of humiliation and injustice that he was entirely unable to even think of sleep. But, as the dreary hours of the night dragged on, the fatigue and excitement through which he had passed, together with the anxiety in regard to his affairs, all combined to assist Nature in asserting her demands upon an honest young fellow possessed of a conscience entirely at rest; and he finally laid himself upon his hard plank bed and slept the sleep of the just. He was awakened by the sounds of life about him at an early hour in the morning, and soon an attendant came to his door and asked if he wished to send out for his breakfast; to which suggestion Dunbar assented, and soon he was supplied with a substantial meal. Then he was allowed to make such ablutions as the conveniences, or rather, the inconveniences, of the place would admit; but here he met with some embarrassment: As far as he had been able to analyze his feelings or his intentions, the wish to conceal rather than to reveal his identity had been uppermost. The idea of his name getting into the newspapers as connected with such a masquerading enterprise as he had been engaged in was neither soothing to his vanity, nor would it be calculated to assist him in the delicate piece of business he had on hand in looking into his affairs. To remove his disguise was to open the eyes of his jailors to an entirely new condition of affairs, and to set them upon a new line of investigation. To allow matters to remain as they were, might prove equally puzzling to them; but, as they were bound to be puzzled in either case, perhaps this course would prove to be, from his own point of view, at least, the lesser horn of the dilemma. So he decided to continue his disguise; and, as his moustache and paint would hardly have resisted the application of water, he refrained from washing altogether.

So, accoutred as he was, that is to say, in the naturally dishevelled condition in which a man would appear after a night spent as our friend had spent his, *plus* a very ineffectual and bedraggled disguise, he was taken to the police court in Marlborough Street. Here, while waiting for his turn to appear in court, he was thrust into a subterranean cell, which he spoke of afterwards as, "far from being abreast with the civilization of the times in which we live." His turn came at last, and he ascended an iron spiral staircase, at the top of which he found himself in a crowded and ill smelling court room, and in the presence of his accusers.

"Prisoner, you are charged with an attempt at burglary. What do you plead to the charge; guilty or not guilty?"

"Decidedly, *not* guilty," said Dunbar, with difficulty restraining himself from making a demonstration in court.

Then the police inspector was called, and told his story. He had identified the prisoner as a very skilful and dangerous burglar, who went under several aliases; but was generally known as "Colfax!" "He had run against him in Piccadilly Circus the evening before, and had followed him to Portland Place; where he had caught him red-handed in the act of entering a fine house by means of a false slip-key. When arrested, the prisoner had violently assaulted him; and had pleaded the old and thread bare story of entering his own house."

"You, of course, took pains to ascertain that this was not true?"

"Of course I did; your worship. I rang the door-bell and asked the butler who answered if he knew the prisoner; and his answer was that he had never laid eyes upon him in his life. This man has played this game over and over again; your worship. He is a gentleman burglar. Gets himself up, as you see, in good clothing, and would pass anywhere as a gentleman returning home from the

theatre. Opens the door of the house with a slip key, just as if he owned the place; and, if caught, actually says he *does own* it; as this man said last evening."

"And you positively identify him as the man Colfax? I see by the charge sheet that he refused to give his name and address last night."

"Yes, your worship, I positively identify him." Then looking intently at Dunbar, he changed color, and said, in evident surprise; "I see, your worship, that the man is made up. He looks different by daylight, I admit; your worship. You can see, your worship, his face has been touched up, and I am inclined to think he has on a false moustache. Yes, I am sure he has; your worship."

"So then, you *don't* absolutely identify him?"

"Well, your worship, I should like to see him without his disguise; but, in any case, he was entering a house when I arrested him, and a house where he was not known, and had no right to enter. There can be no doubt about *that*. *And*, he assaulted me."

"Have you any explanation to make, prisoner?"

"None; none except what I made when this man arrested me. I said then that I was entering my own house. I say so now."

"Yes, but your disguise. A gentleman is hardly expected to be masquerading in the streets of London in paint and false whiskers without *some* object in view. The whiskers *are* false; are they not? I can distinctly detect the paint myself."

"Yes; I had occasion, for purposes of my own, to assume a slight disguise. Is there any crime in *that*? I am charged, I believe, with an attempt at burglarly; which is a very different affair, as I fancy your worship will admit."

"Um, yes; but the disguise is a very suspicious circumstance."

"Very well, sir, if I am to be arrested, tried and convicted on a suspicious circumstance, why I suppose I must submit to it; but I should doubt the legality of the proceeding."

"Are you not represented by counsel?"

"No, I am not."

"Why, may I ask?"

"Because, from the suddenness of the arrest, I have had no opportunity of communicating with my solicitor. There are other reasons, also; but I prefer not to give them."

"Shall I assign you a solicitor?"

"No, your worship. You have subjected me to the humiliation of an arrest upon an absolutely false charge, and I leave you to prove it. I have nothing else to say."

"You will compel me, I fear, to remand you for further inquiries; which I should be loath to do, if you really have a satisfactory explanation at hand for your action in this affair."

"You will do as you see fit, sir; I have nothing further to say."

Then followed a somewhat protracted discussion between the detective and the magistrate, in a low tone of voice, in which Dunbar felt satisfied that the inspector was getting the worst of it. A free and full explanation of the whole affair, he felt sure, would have saved him at this stage of the proceedings; but he did not wish to get into the newspapers under his own name, *and* he was both amused and indignant at the turn the affair had taken. At any rate, he decided to stand his ground; and he did.

"Prisoner remanded for a week, for further inquiries," announced the magistrate; and, in due time, Dunbar was escorted to the regions below, and locked in his cell to await the arrival of the prison van to take him away. After an hour or so, in which the business of the court

was evidently being disposed of, he was taken from his cell, placed in the van with a number of more or less undesirable looking people, and driven rapidly away. In due course, he was landed in Holloway, where he was locked up in a fairly comfortable cell to await the result of inquiries.

To a man undergoing his first experience of this kind, one of his first reflections is apt to be: "Could all of this have been avoided by a little different action on my part?"

To this question he was bound to answer: "Yes, it could." But the answer brought him very little comfort. He had undoubtedly allowed his spleen to get the better of him; and he now began to regret it. He still absolutely refused to believe that the matter could have any but a speedy and a fortunate termination; but there was something very uncompromising and grim about those prison walls! To a man habitually accustomed to deference and respect from his inferiors, it was far from pleasant to be treated as a criminal. He felt lonely and utterly out of the world in the silence and gloom of the place. Then, naturally, he was oppressed with anxiety on account of his family. They would doubtless be dreadfully alarmed at his unexplained absence. Finally, there were his affairs helplessly drifting upon the rocks, as the result of his untimely accident. At times he could almost have cried out with anxiety and vexation; but then the conviction of the futility of his doing so was forced back upon him. Who would take the trouble to answer him, if he *did* cry out? Thousands had come and gone in this miserable place, some to freedom, some to a long or a short term of imprisonment, some to death; and the outside world had not, and did not, apparently, trouble itself about the matter! How much had he ever troubled himself or even thought of those poor wretches; some of them, doubtless, as innocent as himself, some not so; but *all* equally sufferers?

The day wore on absolutely uneventfully. He was given for his dinner a mixture called "suet pudding"; not altogether unappetizing. For his supper, some dark colored bread. At night, a plank bed reared against the wall of his cell, was taken down; which, with a thin and not over luxurious mattress, constituted his bed. In the morning he had some porridge for breakfast, which he ate with a wooden spoon. No knife or fork were included in the menage. He was allowed a morning paper, but a hole in it in the portion allotted to police news indicated where some allusion to his own affair had been cut out. He was allowed a book from the prison library, and was given an hour's walk in the yard; but there was very little comfort in it, as he was compelled to walk around and around a circumscribed course with a number of other prisoners, kept at a distance from each other which precluded the possibility of conversation, and with officers on guard to see that the regulation was scrupulously carried out.

After the walk each day, the prisoners were all drawn up in line at one side of the yard, while a large number of detectives in plain clothes passed by, carefully inspecting them to see if they could discover any familiar faces amongst them. After this, a number of the prisoners were called out of the ranks to be more closely inspected and questioned by these officers.

For the first two or three days, Dunbar refrained from disturbing his false moustache as far as possible; but, as time wore on, the inconvenience and the lack of cleanliness incident to keeping up his very thin disguise induced him at last to entirely discard it. He therefore pulled off the false hair which had been attached to his upper lip by some kind of glue, and indulged in the luxury of the first really complete wash-up he had enjoyed for days. As his prison equipment did not include a mirror, he was

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unable to see the change that this had made in his personal appearance; but, he became conscious of it when, after his walk in the yard that day, and the inspection by the plain-clothes men, he heard his name, or rather his number called out. Upon being assigned to his room on the day of his arrival, he had been handed a yellow disc of heavy woolen cloth with a letter indicating the wing of the institution his room was in, and a number designating the room, which was buttoned upon his coat flap. His ticket read A. 9. 4.; and now, hearing this substitute for a name called out, he answered the summons, and soon found himself face to face with his old friend the detective; in another part of the yard.

"So, you have concluded to come out into the open, at last, have you?" said the man, giving him a very searching look, "Come, now, what is the use of sulking any longer. Tell us who you are and what's your little game? Its far the wisest thing for you to do."

"For a man so cock-sure of my name as you were the other day, it seems to me that you are the person to speak and not I. At any rate, I decline to talk with you; and you will save time by not trying to make me," said Dunbar.

The man had assumed rather a discouraged and uncertain look upon this, but perked up as well as he could, and asked Dunbar several other questions which that young man absolutely refused to answer; and soon he was sent back to his cell.

And so the days wore on, each so like its immediate predecessor and successor as to be almost indistinguishable. Each little different feature in the routine of the day, such as a variety of food served him, or the exchange of his library book, or some unimportant incident in his daily walk assumed a momentousness entirely out of proportion to its intrinsic weight. He tried to keep up his

spirits by reading, or by employing his thoughts in speculating upon what his family, his friends, and especially, his enemies were doing. Then came a time, when, although he felt the injustice of the thought, he could not refrain from feeling indignant and rebellious that his family could leave him alone and forsaken in such straits as he was in. There is a quality in the human mind which leads it to hug its secret sorrows, and to feed upon its miseries: There is no place in the world like a prison to promote such a mental condition. Poor Dunbar, without admitting it, was getting discouraged. He was finding, as many a poor fellow had found, not only the strength, but the tyranny of the law. The right to personal liberty was becoming to him, as it is to all men, the most precious thing in life; the deprivation of it, especially without just cause, the greatest possible wrong society could inflict upon one of its own members. To take a man forcibly away from his family and friends, from his usual life and avocations, his business and his pleasures, and to immure him in a dungeon; was a horrible exercise of power. It was a relic of barbarism; when men had no sense of right except such as was their's by reason of might. The whole question of man's assumption of the right to punish his fellowman passed by him in review, for the first time in his life; and he admitted to himself with contrition that he had given the whole matter just about as much attention, from the active concerns in the outside world, as most men had; which was none at all. For the first time in his life, by reason of his own present and bitter experience, he pictured to himself the tortures, the miseries of prison life for men known to be guilty, let alone the innocent ones. The very human way we have, surrounded by our worldly comforts and possessions, of taking it for granted that the suspected man is almost necessarily the guilty man, and the unfortunate one nearly as bad; came

home to him now as it had never done before. In future he should be much more inclined to give a man accused of crime the benefit of the doubt; and even the guilty one a larger share of his charity than he would ever have bestowed upon him before. And so the time wore on.

And now we will leave poor Dunbar to his fate for a while within the gloomy walls of Holloway Castle, and see what was going on among the various people with whom he was connected outside of his prison walls. Our first visit will be to Dobson's office in Theobald's Road. Two days after Dunbar's arrest, that gentleman was seated in his private room at the close of his day's work, thinking over his prospects: "The game is up," he said to himself, wearily; "I have exhausted every possible remedy, and only two ways are open to me; one, to tell Dunbar how I have robbed him, and throw myself upon his mercy; the other, to run away. Now, which shall I do? If I accept the first alternative, I may possibly succeed in making it appear to his advantage to accept some sort of a compromise by means of which I shall help him to unravel all the intricacies of his affairs, which he will never be able to do for himself, as the price of immunity from prosecution. In that way, I may be able to save something out of the wreck of my own fortunes for my wife and children. On the other hand, I may be putting the halter around my own neck which is to hang me. I have still a large sum of money and many of his securities left, which I could hand him over as the price of my personal liberty, or retain in case of his refusal to come to terms."

"On the other hand, if I run away, I shall have all those assets to begin business with in a foreign land. Now, which shall it be?" From Dunbar's natural goodness of heart, I think I might count upon his forgiveness. Perhaps it would be best for me to try this move first, and if it fails arrange matters in such a manner that I can still

fall back upon my other alternative. This is what I will do."

Carrying out this plan, as he went home that evening, he sent Dunbar the following telegram: "Important that I should see you at once. Tomorrow at ten, if possible."

Dobson.

The next morning he was at his office an hour before his usual time, to have everything in order for instant flight in case Dunbar refused to take a lenient view of matters. In parting from his family, he had told them that he might possibly be compelled to take a trip to the continent upon a matter of business. He had a portmanteau packed in case of need, which he took with him. Arrived at his office, he had taken a bundle of Dunbar's securities from his safe and placed them in his portmanteau to be in readiness for a speedy retreat. He had already cashed checks for large amounts, then converted the Bank of England notes into continental and American moneys, still leaving a rather large sum in bank which he could dispose of by check after he had fully decided upon the course he was to pursue. Having accomplished all this, he spent the rest of the time while waiting for Dunbar's visit in carefully destroying old papers and books of account which might furnish interesting reading to his pursuers after he had taken flight. Like most men in difficulties and meditating an escape from them, his greatest fear lay in the direction of some sudden and unexpected action upon the part of the man he had wronged. Assuming, for instance, that Dunbar had had some inkling of his defalcation for some time back, the receipt of his urgent telegram might be the signal for an immediate application for a warrant for his arrest. He must be prepared for this. He went over in his mind just what would happen after Dunbar had received his telegram. "He had

it about seven o'clock last evening," he said to himself. "Supposing he intended to take any action against me, it would be too late to consult any solicitor at *that* time. In the morning, he might go to a criminal solicitor and send him to a magistrate for a warrant; but the court would not be open until ten o'clock, the hour set for his meeting with me here. So that if he *comes*, as I hope he may, I shall be pretty safe in assuming that he has not as yet taken any steps; whereas, if he does *not* come, I shall begin to think he has. If he comes, I can pretty well judge by his manner whether or not he is going to be hostile. If feeling sure he *is*, I can leave immediately; for it will be a matter of several hours taking the necessary steps to secure a warrant; and, in the meantime, I shall be miles away from London, headed for the continent."

So, he reasoned it out in his mind; and, as the time slipped away, his anxiety increased momentarily. "I wish he would come. Why *don't* he come?" he said to himself, repeatedly, as at last the clock pointed to the hour of ten. Every time the door of the outer office was heard to open or close, his heart thumped against its walls, as he exclaimed: "There he is!"

But ten o'clock came and went, and no Dunbar appeared. Half-past ten came, and *still* he failed to appear. By this time, when he heard anyone open the outside door, he quailed with fear lest Dunbar should enter with an officer of the court and give him in charge. With the greatest possible difficulty, he stood the strain until eleven o'clock was striking from the tower of a neighboring church; and then, pale and trembling, he took his cheque-book, drew a cheque for the balance remaining at his Bank, to the order of a man he could trust, who, by a previous arrangement, would know what to do with it. He folded it, placed it in an envelope, addressed it with a trembling hand, put a postage stamp upon it; making all ready to drop it in a pillar

box upon his way to the train. Then, going into the front office he said to his managing clerk: "Simpson, say to Mr. Dunbar when he comes, that I waited for him until after eleven o'clock, and couldn't really wait any longer; as I am due, as I told you yesterday I might be, to take the eleven-forty-five at Euston Station for the North. Ask him to kindly make another appointment, say, in a week's time; after my return. Central Hotel, Glasgow, will find me in the meantime; if he cares to write."

Then, taking his portmanteau, he left the office, descended the stairs into the street; called a cab, calmly handed his valise to the cabby to be placed on top, directed him in as steady a voice as he could command to drive to Euston Station. Arrived there, he paid and dismissed the man, posted his letter, took his portmanteau, entered the station; then he went to the lavatory, where, taking a traveling cap from his bag, he put it on, tied a muffler about his neck, left his hat carelessly upon the dressing table as if he had forgotten it in his haste to catch his train. Then he emerged from the station, called another cab; and in a twinkling was being driven at a rapid pace to the St. Paul's Station of the London, Chatham and Dover line.

CHAPTER VIII.

Two days after Dunbar's unfortunate experience, a telegram was delivered at his house for him, which was opened by his mother, and which read :

"Come." C. Marley.

"Mrs. Marley," with an address in an out-of-the-way part of the town, was what the mysterious woman had inscribed in his note-book on the evening of their meeting. Catherine Marley, or Kate Marley, as we shall call her, had overheard another conversation which had indicated to her mind that the crisis she had predicted had arrived ; and that if anything was to be done to protect Dunbar's interests it must be done at once. After sending the telegram, she had repaired to the appointed rendezvous and had waited as patiently as only a woman can wait for the man she wished to save from impending evil. But she had waited in vain. At first she feared that Dunbar, for some unforeseen reason, might not have received her message, and she determined to try sending another. Upon reflection, however, it occurred to her that the same obstacle which had stood in the way of the receipt of her first wire would be equally operative in regard to the second ; and she refrained. At last, however, she became so anxious, that she went to Portland Place in the vague hope of seeing or hearing something in regard to our hero. After walking up and down the street until she feared to attract attention, and hearing or seeing nothing, she finally retired, more anxious than before. From what she had heard in

regard to Dunbar's affairs, she felt almost certain that such pressure had at last been brought to bear upon Dobson by Gow and his fellow conspirators, that something in the nature of a catastrophe was sure to come about. Just what it would be, she of course could not say. Two or three more days passed without her hearing anything more of Dunbar, and her anxiety was proportionately increased as the time rolled on. What *had* become of him?

So worried had she become by this time, that her footsteps seemed to gravitate towards Portland Place by an attraction she could not resist, and *this* time she was fortunate enough to see two ladies, evidently Dunbar's mother and sister, leave the house in their carriage, just as she was passing. If ever trouble and grief were written in intelligible characters upon human faces, it was written there. On the evening of the sixth day since she had last seen Dunbar, she was surprised by a knock at her door, upon opening it was informed that a man wished to see her in the hall of her lodging house. The air of mystery and formalism with which this man addressed her, when, in response to his summons she had made her appearance, indicated to a somewhat practiced eye like her's that he belonged to the Police Department.

"Are you Mrs. C. Marley, madame?" he asked, respectfully enough.

"Yes, I am," she answered, with some apparent hesitation, however, as if, possibly, under different circumstances she might have given a different answer. The man gave her a look as if to say, "one name is as good as another for my present purpose," and then, aloud, "are you the Mrs. Marley referred to in this note-book?" handing her Dunbar's tablets, upon which she immediately recognized the entry she had made. Her change of color and agitation answered this question affirmatively for her before she could trust herself to speak. She was beset by two fears

now; the one she had already felt for Dunbar's personal safety, and a new fear that inadvertently she should fall into some trap set by the police, the result of which would be to injure the very man she would so gladly save. So she hesitated before answering the question. The officer encouraged her by saying in a tone and manner which somehow disarmed her fears:

"You need not be afraid. If you are a real friend of the gentleman to whom you gave that address, the very best proof you can give of it is to throw any light you can upon his identity; for he is in serious trouble."

Even with this assurance, though given with evident kindness, Kate Marley was not fully reassured. Perhaps the circumstances of her life were hardly favorable to a belief in men. At last she asked:

"What is the nature of his trouble?"

"I am here to receive rather than to give information," responded the man, a little gruffly; but, since you ask, perhaps there's no great harm in telling you he's been arrested on a charge of burglary. We felt pretty sure we had an old offender named 'Gentleman Colfax,' until yesterday; when Colfax was caught comin' out of an 'ouse loaded down with swag enough to fill an omnibus. Now, as it isn't likely there are *two* Colfaxes, I'm afraid we shall have to let one of 'em go; but we'd like to find out something about the first one while he's in our 'ands, as he was caught enterin' an 'ouse in disguise; and he assaulted the officer who arrested him. I happen to know; as I was the officer. Now if you can identify the man, it will save us a lot of trouble, as he certainly seems to be a gentleman; and if there's nothin' against 'im, we'd like to let 'im go."

"Was the house you say he was entering in Portland Place, near the Park end of the street?"

"Yes, it was."

"Well, then, it was his own house he was entering, and

you have arrested one of the finest as well as one of the richest gentlemen in London. You had better let him go as soon as you can; for he is not a man to be trifled with, I can assure you."

The man's face took on a somewhat troubled look, but he answered: "It can't be the owner of the 'ouse, mum; for I rang the bell and asked the butler, and he said he had never laid eyes upon 'im before."

"Didn't you tell me the gentleman you arrested was in disguise?"

"By George, I never thought of *that*," exclaimed the man, as if a new light had suddenly broken in upon him. "We never knew he was disguised, though, until the next day, when he appeared in court. He was as like 'Gentleman Colfax' as any two peas, when I took 'im in; I'll give you my word of *that*."

"Did the gentleman give you his name?"

"No, mum. He said he was the owner of the 'ouse, and that as we'd given 'im the name of Colfax, 'e wouldn't contradict us. Do you know 'is real name, mium?"

"Of course, I do; but if he would not give it to you, he undoubtedly had good reasons for not doing so; reasons which I shall respect."

"'E didn't want to get 'is real name in the papers, I expect; and I don't know as I blame 'im, bein' the gentleman you say he is."

"Very likely; and there may have been other reasons as well. When did the arrest take place?"

"A week ago to-morrow, mum."

"At what time?"

"About ten o'clock in the evening."

Kate thought a moment, and then it flashed upon her that that was the very evening she had met Dunbar. He had gone to the eating-house in Leicester Square to get wind of the conspiracy she had warned him of, had dis-

guised himself by a curious coincidence into a likeness of a well-known burglar; and, well, had suffered the consequences. He had been too proud to explain the situation, and had been locked up as a result. The whole matter stood revealed now, as clear as the noonday sun. "And, now, what do you wish me to do?" she asked.

"Why, 'e'll be in the Marlborough Street Police Court to-morrow morning, mum, and if you'll be there to identify 'im, it would 'elp us and 'im. Shall I serve you with a summons, or will you come of your own accord?"

"I would go a thousand miles on my hands and knees to serve that man. So we'll dispense with the summons. I'll be there as sure as the clock strikes ten."

As this was all that could be done that evening, the officer now took his leave. It being still early, he took a cab and requested to be driven to Dunbar's house in Portland Place. Arriving there, he rang the bell, and soon stood in the presence of the butler who had denied his master on the occasion of their first meeting.

"Take this card to your mistress," he said, producing a paste-board upon which was engraved; 'Inspector Evans, Scotland Yard.' "Tell the lady it is of the greatest importance that I see her at once."

The servant moved at a much faster pace than his sense of dignity usually permitted to execute this order, for, sooth to say, a vague feeling that trouble was in the air impelled him. In a few moments he returned, with a request that the officer be shown into the reception room, where she would see him. Evans had hardly taken his seat, when Mrs. Dunbar, accompanied by her two daughters, entered the room:

"I'm afraid, madame," Evans began, rather awkwardly, "that a great mistake has been made. Is there anything, beg pardon, I mean anybody missing about the house?"

"My son, sir, Mr. Patrick Dunbar, has been missing for

nearly a week, as I have already reported to your superior, I suppose, at Scotland Yard. You come with a message from him, I suppose. What is it? Let us know the worst at once. Is he dead?"

"Good God, madame, you don't mean to say? Ah, I see it all now. Why, madame, I really beg ten thousand pardons; but I am the man who arrested him as he was entering this very 'ouse a week ago, come to-morrow night. I really 'ope, madame, you will overlook an accident as might 'appen easily to a man in our line of business. I really 'ope you will, and the young ladies, too." Here the poor fellow took his pocket handkerchief, and mopped his forehead, as some persons do under circumstances of great embarrassment. Then followed a pause.

"I am waiting for your explanation of this affair," finally said Mrs. Dunbar, with some asperity, which served to much increase the present difficulties. "Why, mum, I mean, madame, for the life of me, I never saw such a likeness between two, ahem, gentlemen, as there was between your son and 'Gentleman Colfax.' I really never did. That's before 'e took off his disguise, mum. Of course, after I saw him with a clean face, I saw a mistake 'ad been made. Then, of course, the other lady, 'is friend; I beg parding, mum, perhaps I shouldn't speak of her before the young ladies; but, Mrs. Marley, she set me right."

"Will you kindly refrain from mixing my son's name up with questionable women or disguises; for he, to my certain knowledge, has nothing whatever to do with either."

"Mamma, you know the telegram you opened was signed 'Marley,'" whispered Alice to her mother.

"I know it was, dear," responded Mrs. Dunbar, "but this vulgar wretch need not know *that*. And now, sir, as there appears to have been some mistake, will you be good enough to immediately produce my son?" The good old

lady seemed to think the officer had him concealed somewhere about his person.

"Most certainly, mum, 'e will be set at liberty immediately. 'E will be in court at ten o'clock to-morrow, and will be discharged, of course, as soon as ever the magistrate arrives."

"What, are you going to keep a man, whom you yourself admit to be innocent, over night in some gloomy dungeon, in chains, for all I know, and with rats and other horrid things running about? I demand his release at once; this very moment."

"That would be impossible, madame, I fear; but if you would kindly be at the Marlborough Street Police court to-morrow at ten, I feel sure you will be able to bring him home with you."

At this, Inspector Evans took his departure, as gracefully as possible; which was not saying very much.

In the meantime, poor Dunbar was faring about as well as might have been expected, under the circumstances, at Holloway. He had received rather a perfunctory visit from the governor, a stout military-looking gentleman, who, from long association with suspicious characters, had evidently come to have absolutely no faith in any one who came under his fatal battlements. He scowled portentously at Dunbar, with an expression upon his face which saved him the trouble of saying anything at all. It said as plainly as words could say it, "It's not of the slightest use trying to explain your case to me, you know, because I've heard thousands of such explanations before; and I don't believe a word of them. The fact of your being here is quite good enough evidence for me that you deserve to be here."

After this, the prison chaplain called, a very glum-looking man, who told Dunbar he "hoped it would be a warning to him," and walked on to the next unfortunate, who

probably got exactly the same treatment; for he looked like a man who never changed a formula he had once found by experience to answer his purpose. Then Dunbar had been called out of the line once or twice by Evans and questioned, but with no result whatever. Our hero simply refused to talk with him. Then Sunday came, and a gloomy day it proved to him. There was no walk in the yard on Sunday. There was a service in the chapel, a very mournful sermon from the chaplain, calculated to depress anyone's spirits, but more particularly those of the poor devils to whom it was addressed, who *had* to hear it whether they liked it or not. It was about as dreary an experience as could possibly be imagined, and Dunbar's heart sank at the possibility of ever having another to face in the place. The old feeling that he had been abandoned by his family and friends was now more strongly upon him than ever. He had a desperate feeling which found expression in such words as "Well, if they have abandoned me, I fancy I can stand it as long as they can. I shall never forgive them, though," and the like. While thinking such things, he knew of course that all he had to do was to call for pen and ink and paper to put an end to his troubles; but this would involve publicity, and then he had begun to rather enjoy his sulky, desperate mood; and not to care to change it.

One result of all this was that the poor young fellow was rapidly, though perhaps unconsciously, assuming another disguise in the place of the one he had discarded. He had no facilities whatever for shaving, or for changing his linen. Neither had he any night dress. So, with these deprivations he was rapidly lapsing into a savage condition and appearance, quite at variance with the usual trim neatness which characterized the man. The week came round at last, however, and upon the morning of the day upon which he was expected to appear in court, he was

placed in the prison van, and driven off to Marlborough Street. As before, he was placed in a cell in the lower regions to wait his turn to be haled into court. It seemed to him, however, although he could hardly define the change, that he was treated with greater consideration than when he had been in the place before.

At last his cell door was unlocked, and he was requested to ascend the spiral staircase into the court-room. The place was as crowded and as ill-smelling as before, but a suppressed excitement was evident to our hero as he calmly surveyed the apartment to see whether he could recognize anyone in the room.

"Is Mrs. Catherine Marley present?" asked the clerk, in a rather loud voice. In answer to this summons, a movement in the press was observable, and to his surprise, his mysterious friend pushed her way, as well as the density of the crowd would admit, until she had responded to her name:

"Ah, Mrs. Marley, will you kindly step into the witness box. You solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; so help you God. Kiss the Book, please. Now, Mrs. Marley, will you kindly look at the prisoner in the dock and tell us whether you have ever seen him before?"

Kate turned her gaze in the direction indicated, and saw a disheveled likeness of the man she had once known as Patrick Dunbar. He had a week's growth of beard. His clothing was creased and wrinkled from having been slept in, and sadly needed brushing. His linen was in the condition a week's sequestration from a laundry would pre-suppose. But the clear eye, the kindly honest expression upon his face, the fearless, straight forward look in his eyes were present for all men to see, and for such of them as knew an honest man when they saw one, to recognize in this much-abused young man. Kate looked at him approv-

ingly, as if in her sad experience of life it was good for her eyes to fall upon such a specimen of manhood as stood before her.

"Yes, I perfectly recognize the gentleman," she said, with a dignity and self-possession which surprised Dunbar, although he had already seen something of this singular woman's characteristics.

"You say you recognize the prisoner? What is his name, and when did you see him last?"

"I said I recognized the *gentleman*; for gentleman he is, whether prisoner or not. As to giving his *name*, as I understand he has declined, probably for perfectly proper reasons to give it, *I* shall also decline, until I have his permission to do so."

"You must recollect, Mrs. Marley, that you are in Her Majesty's Court, and upon your oath. I need not remind you that you must be guarded in what you do and say; and incidentally, please allude to the prisoner as 'the *prisoner*.' We recognize no *gentlemen* while they are standing in the dock of this court accused of crime."

"And I should not only recognize him as a gentleman, but should allude to him as such, were he already tried and convicted, and standing before me in prison garb," said Kate, looking the magistrate defiantly in the face.

"Tut, tut, Mrs. Marley, you allow your ardor to get the better of you. You must not address the court in that manner, or I shall be compelled to commit you for contempt."

If his worship had committed the woman for only half the contempt she evidently took no pains to conceal, as he said this, to say nothing of what she probably felt, it might have been a long time before she would have seen the blessed light of day again, except through prison bars.

"You have asked me to identify this *gentleman*, and I absolutely identify him. I also absolutely refuse to men-

tion his name, or any other particulars concerning him, until I have his full permission to do so."

"Oh ho, you decline to mention his name, do you? We'll see about this. You decline—"

"No, not decline. I *refuse*."

By this time, not only the prisoner, but everyone in the room were greatly interested and amused, Dunbar particularly; and being perfectly satisfied now that his troubles were about at an end, he determined to allow matters to take their course; without, certainly, volunteering any aid. So he put on an imperturbable expression, and said nothing. The magistrate and his clerk in the meantime were engaged in a conversation in too low a voice to be heard. After this had gone on for several minutes, the magistrate turned to the witness and said, "You may stand down, for the present, Mrs. Marley; but please do not leave the court-room. We may need you again."

Then Inspector Evans was called, and testified that having seen the prisoner on several occasions since the night of his arrest, without his disguise, and owing to the fact of the man he had taken him for having been arrested, he now retracted his former testimony as to the identification of the prisoner. In fact, he had been deceived by the amazing likeness to a well-known criminal; as anyone else might easily have been, under the circumstances. He was sorry for it, but it couldn't be helped. Such accidents would occasionally happen, even at Scotland Yard. Since the arrest of 'Gentleman Colfax,' and *his* positive identification, he had heard of the disappearance of a gentleman by the name of Patrick Dunbar from the very house in Portland Place which the prisoner at present standing in the dock was arrested while entering. From a memorandum in a note-book found upon the person of the prisoner when he was searched at the police station, he had obtained the name and address of Mrs. Marley, who had just left the

witness stand. From what she said during a visit he had made upon her at the address given in the note-book, he personally was fully satisfied that the prisoner in the dock was none other than Patrick Dunbar; but, in the absence of any actual acquaintance with the prisoner under that name, of course, he could not swear to it; and that as the last witness, although recognizing the prisoner, had refused to give his name, the full identification of the prisoner as Patrick Dunbar lacked a final intervening link, which could only be supplied by a person or persons who not only knew him to be that gentleman, but who would say that they did.

This was the inspector's testimony in effect, and just as he finished speaking, a commotion was caused by the entrance into the court-room of two stately and beautifully appointed ladies, one an elderly one, the other younger; who were evidently desirous of attracting the attention of the magistrate. As soon as the elderly lady got speech of that officer, she said, with considerable excitement: "*I can supply the missing link, sir. I am the prisoner's mother, and I fully identify him as Patrick Dunbar, my son; and I demand his instant release, and an ample apology for the humiliation and anxiety you have caused his family and my son by his outrageous and illegal arrest.*"

Matters were evidently approaching a crisis, and the cat was now pretty well out of the bag. Scotland Yard and the Marlborough Street Police Court were, for once in their lives, at least, caught napping. In their intense zeal to do their duty, as it sometimes happens, they had succeeded in doing a good deal *more* than their duty. They were in an exceedingly awkward position. They had not only arrested a perfectly innocent man, but they had arrested a rich and influential man, as well as an innocent one; had subjected him to a week's false imprisonment, had reviled him and despitefully used him, and were now bearded in

their dens, so to speak, first, by a rebellious witness, who simply laughed at the court and openly defied it, and now by an undoubted gentlewoman, humiliated and enraged, as a mother would be likely to be in defending her son from an outrageous charge.

Here was trouble ahead for officialdom engaged in this unfortunate affair, or, to say the very least of it, a good deal of newspaper talk and ridicule; all of which is just the kind of trouble the hardest to bear on the part of those in authority.

Mrs. Dunbar was evidently in no mood to be trifled with or refused. She had by this time recovered from the embarrassment a refined woman would naturally feel in suddenly finding herself in the midst of such squalid and unaccustomed surroundings. Her breath seemed to come in spasmodic efforts. There was all the fire in her eye of a wounded tigress defending her young. She kept on advancing towards the bench, utterly oblivious now to all the conventions made and established in the premises. She had apparently no more fear of the judge or of the law in which he was engaged in administering than a wounded tigress would have had; and infinitely more contempt.

"Are you going to release my son, sir, or will you compel me to go to Parliament, or to the First Lord of the Treasury, the Prime Minister of England, the Queen herself, with the story of the infamous outrage you have inflicted upon an innocent gentleman, and a highly respectable and honorable family?"

"Restrain yourself, madame, restrain yourself. You must be aware that the language you are using to the court is, um, ahem, entirely out of order, even for a lady of your evident, um, respectability."

If there is anything which to the English mind stands for impregnable respectability, it is a carriage with an emblem of some kind on its door panel, with a coachman

and a footman in livery, patiently waiting the pleasure of its master or mistress. Such an equipage was now standing in the street in front of the court. The ladies themselves who, by their bearing, dress and manners might have been duchesses, were not, at any rate, persons to be treated upon lines which would apply to the class of people ordinarily found in a court-room; by any manner of means. Add to this the very important fact that this time the court was obviously, confessedly in the wrong; and it can be readily understood that Mrs. and Miss Dunbar were pretty formidable people to deal with, even to a judge.

"I demand again, and for the last time, sir, whether you are going to keep my son for another moment in the degrading position he now occupies?" cried the now infuriated old gentlewoman.

"Madame, I again request you to calm yourself, and to take your place in the witness box. After you have been sworn, and have given your evidence in regular form, I have not the slightest doubt we shall be able to fully and honorably discharge the, um, ahem, prisoner. Now, do calm yourself, my dear madame, and listen to reason."

All this seemed to only add to the infuriation of the old lady. "Do you mean to put me, sir, *me* into a dirty witness box like the one you have already put one member of our family in, and ask *me* to kiss a Bible, which may for all I know have been kissed by a leper, only a half an hour ago? Do you *dare*, sir, to offer me and my daughter such an indignity? For the last time, instantly release my son, or detain him another moment at your peril! I absolutely refuse to either enter your witness box, or to kiss your Book. But let me tell you *one* thing; Mr. Magistrate: If I leave this court-room without Mr. Patrick Dunbar sitting by my side in his carriage, you must take him back to prison to remain until I return with some gentlemen who will at one and the same time release my son and remove *you* from

the office you so stupidly and disgracefully fill. Now, take your choice; for I have no time to trifle."

"Madame, I am quite convinced of the entire innocence of the prisoner, your son; and I am going to discharge him, honorably discharge him; but don't for a moment suppose that I do so under the impulse of your threat. Such language as you have used in this court, is, I am bound to say, um, ahem, unprecedented, unprecedented; and I could easily have you committed for it. I—"

Mrs. Dunbur's answer to this last remark was to bestow upon the magistrate a withering glance, in which scorn, contempt and suppressed rage were mingled. She then turned her back upon him, and began the task of forcing her way through the crowd in the direction of the door, which had become by no means an easy matter by this time; so great was the interest in the scene which had taken place.

"Madame," called the magistrate, after her, "restrain your—"

Not a word came from the retreating pythoness.

"Prisoner discharged," he ended his sentence; and then a burst of applause went up from the throng which it would have been as impossible to suppress as the rising of the tide.

Dunbar stepped proudly from the dock, a free man; and the crowd parted respectfully to allow him to join his mother and sister.

"Wait a moment, mother," he said, as he came to her side. "There is a lady who has helped me in my trouble here whom I wish to thank for her loyalty."

"Who is it?" demanded his mother, haughtily. "Not that horrid woman?"

"The lady I wish to thank is Mrs. Marley, to whom I shall always be grateful for her noble and disinterested treatment of me. Ah, here she is. Mrs. Marley, this is my

mother, Mrs. Dunbar, and this is my sister, Alice. We all of us thank you for your kindness to me to-day and shall never forget it." He took her cordially by the hand, and gave her a smile which an angel might have envied to give or to receive, and bowed as if she had been a queen. His mother and sister in no wise recognized her existence, but walked out of the room with the stately stride with which they had entered it. Then, Dunbar, having said a few polite and kind words to the mysterious woman, took his leave, joined his mother in the carriage, and they all drove away together.

CHAPTER IX.

We will now follow the fortunes of our old friend Dobson. We left that gentleman as he drove up in a cab to the St. Paul's station of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway. Having no luggage but a small portmanteau which he could easily carry in his hand, he dismissed the cab, entered the waiting room, took an apparently indifferent look about the place to see whether there was anyone he knew, but really to see whether he was watched. Then he purchased a third-class ticket to Margate. Then he mounted the steps leading to the platform, and impatiently waited for his train. He had some time to wait, and it was as much as he could do to restrain his impatience to be off. Just at this season of the year there were thousands of excursionists to the sea-side places; and he had taken a third-class ticket to as much as possible identify himself with the crowd, and be lost in it. With his cap drawn over his eyes, and his muffler concealing the lower part of his face, he was fairly well disguised; but the wicked flee where no man pursueth, and he was one of the wicked; and he had no intention of having anyone pursue him to any advantage. The train came along at last, and Dobson entered a third-class smoker, lighted a pipe, and apparently buried himself in his newspaper, but in reality kept a very sharp lookout for suspicious looking strangers who might take an interest in him.

Nothing worthy of note happened on the journey. To be sure, he was a good deal startled, when, after feeling

that one of the men in the compartment had been watching him with some interest, to feel a hand laid upon his shoulder as they were passing through a tunnel. But, the man, whoever he was, only wanted a light for his pipe; and probably never knew how much he had frightened the party of whom he had asked it. Arrived at Margate, Dobson sauntered down the principal street of the town, as thousands of tourists were doing, and seeing at last a hair-dressing shop, entered it ostensibly for what he termed a wash and brush-up; but really to add to his disguise. Taking a seat in the barber's chair, he said, carelessly, "I've been intending for a long time to shave my beard. Just take it off, will you? As I'm on an 'oliday, I'll just give the missus a surprise when I go 'ome by 'avin a clean face."

"Yes, sir, 'ow will you 'ave it, sir. Leave the moustache on, or will it be mutton chop whiskers, which is much worn now, sir, by our toffs? You'd look superb, sir, in mutton chops. You really would."

"No, every pork butcher in London wears mutton chops. My old woman once said she'd like to see me in a moustache; so moustache let it be."

"Very well, sir, I'm sure you'll look ten years younger in a moustache; you really will."

So, in a very short time, Dobson issued from the barber's shop another Adonis, and much pleased with his changed appearance he noted in the glass. Then he stopped in at a gentleman's outfitting shop to buy an umbrella; and, having found one to his taste, paid for it; but just as he was leaving the place, his eye fell upon a large Inverness cape, which would cover his whole figure. This he bought also, and several other things he allowed himself somewhat reluctantly to be talked into buying by the most obsequious and talkative of shopmen. When he came out of *this* shop, arrayed in his new purchases, his own mother would not

have known him. Having for some time past meditated a possible flight, Dobson had laid his plans: He had heard, for instance, that frequently during each week of the holiday season an excursion steamer sailed from Margate and Ramsgate for Boulogne. After having completed his purchases, he strolled carelessly about the town, for all the world like a commercial traveler on " 'is 'oliday."

Late in the afternoon, he thought it time to make his arrangements for the night; so he entered a small and unimportant hotel near the water, and took a room. Sitting in the coffee room after his dinner, he heard a few rather ordinary-looking pleasure seekers like himself discussing a run over to Boulogne and return on the following day. As this was the information he had been seeking, without caring to openly ask for it, he retired fairly early in the evening to his room, determined to make the trip to the shores of sunny France in the morning.

At ten o'clock the next day he was on the steamer "Cromwell," with all his fortunes, *and* with rather an assorted company of his fellow-countrymen and women; of whom, possibly, he was the only one who would fail to use his return ticket.

Arrived at Boulogne, he began to breathe a little more freely; but he still considered himself as far from safe from pursuit. He found a modest lodgment in the Rue Pot d'etain; and began to look about him. Pretty confident now of his disguise, and in the fact of his having secured a fair start of his possible pursuers, he took no particular pains to conceal himself, but walked about the town looking in at shop windows, and appearing to be interested in what was going on about him, as hundreds of his fellow passengers on the "Cromwell" were doing.

Dobson's objective resting place was America. In his investigations preceding his flight, he had ascertained that a steamer of the Amsterdam Line called at Boulogne every

week. This line at that time was not as well known as it has come to be of late, and he felt more sure of meeting no one he knew, or better still, who knew him, on this route than any other. Still, to avoid all possible accidents, he resolved to go in the steerage. No one would be looking for him in the steerage of a steamer of an unknown line, sailing from a port of call like Boulogne, instead of from Rotterdam, or Amsterdam; the European termini of the line.

So he made his arrangements for sailing coolly and deliberately, as he had made every move so far, and, in a few days found himself a steerage passenger under about as uncomfortable conditions as could easily be imagined. His sleeping accommodation was a rough wooden bunk, of which he at first congratulated himself upon the chance of having secured the lower berth; but subsequent revelations served to change his views upon this matter. A large number of Russian and Polish Jews were his immediate fellow passengers. Among them, the one who occupied the berth directly over him became violently seasick as soon as the steamer got to sea, and remained so for pretty much the whole voyage. This gentleman appeared to consider it a compliment, rather than the reverse, to bestow any and everything in the way of once-used eatables he didn't want himself upon his fellow passenger in the lower berth. In the early part of the voyage Dobson was so sick himself as to be in no condition to protest against this extravagance upon the part of his neighbor; but, after a time, as he recovered, he found it an embarrassment of riches.

In those days, the steerage in even the best appointed ships was far from a comfortable place to travel in; but, on an old, and very dirty ship, with absolutely no appliances for the decencies of life, let alone the amenities, it was a miserable den for a person of any refinement to re-

main cooped up in for some ten days. Sailing from Rotterdam, the steamer had for steerage passengers the most motley assortment of the off-scourings of Europe that could be imagined. The place was literally packed. Men, women and children were huddled in together more like cattle than human beings, and jostled against each other, and fought their ways to the eating place, and the desirable quarters on the decks like so many slaves or cannibals. The steerage being well up in the bows of the vessel, got all the force of the pitching, as well as of the breaking of the seas over her as she forged her way through the water. In any kind of a sea-way the decks were constantly cold and wet, offering but a scanty choice of discomforts between those of the upper and the lower regions. The air below was at times so heavily charged with the sickening body stench of hundreds of filthy people of the very lowest class as to be well nigh unbearable to a man of Dobson's habit of life; but he was afraid to exchange into a more comfortable part of the ship, for fear of being recognized, and so he put up with it as well as he could. The food, as soon as he could bring himself to eat it, was about as detestable as the other things about the ship. For the stomachs for which it was intended, it perhaps had the advantage of familiarity; but this did not apply to Dobson; and it was only by force of absolute starvation that he could bring himself to eat sauer-kraut, a certain kind of large pickled herring, or bloater, served raw and just as they came out of a large barrel, with a dipper of molasses, as a side dish. This was only *one* of the combinations of food and drink provided by the bill of fare; there were others equally attractive. About half-way across the sea, he one day saw a man of rather better appearance than the rest regaling himself upon the leg of a fowl. Well knowing that such a delicacy never came from the part of the ship he was in, he made so bold as to ask the man

how he came by the dainty. The man told him that by giving the cook in the first cabin galley a sovereign he could get all the first cabin food he wanted. Dobson immediately acted upon this hint, with a result that for the rest of the voyage he lived like a king, as compared with his former menage.

As the ship approached the American side, he became nervously worked up over the possibility of his description having been cabled over, and of his being met on the wharf by a detective and handed over to the tender mercies of the New York police force. This fear weighed upon his mind until at times he fancied he should go mad. Some two weeks had now elapsed since he left London. "What is Dunbar doing?" he asked himself a thousand times. "What would *I* do if the positions were reversed, and he had robbed me, instead of my having robbed him?"

"I think I should certainly have *his* description cabled to New York. In fact, I *know* I should. It would be about the first place I should think of as a probable one in which to trace him. Ah, if I were only off this horrible ship, and once again upon dry land. A man stands a living chance on the land; but what chance has he in a place like *this*? In leaving the ship I shall have to pass directly under the noses of the plain clothes men Dunbar will have placed upon my trail. But what else was there to do? I should have been unsafe anywhere in Europe, and I should have had to have taken shipping of some kind to have gone anywhere else!"

And so he went on with questions and answers, working himself up into a frenzy of terror which was intensified in direct proportion to the now rapidly decreasing distance between the vessel he was on and the promised land. It was with a thrill of apprehension too terrible for words, when at last he heard some one say that land would be sighted on the morrow. And when it *was* sighted he al-

most swooned with fear. Not to protract this part of our narrative, however, too much, at the expense of other matters of more importance, suffice it to say, the vessel arrived in New York on a Saturday afternoon, too late to land the steerage passengers, or those among them who were not citizens of the United States; which certainly applied to Dobson; so they had to remain on board until Monday morning. All day Sunday, chained to the wharf, with an almost tropical sun beating down upon her, the vessel lay, crowded with perhaps a thousand miserable immigrants struggling for positions upon the deck from which they could get a breath of air. This unlooked-for delay in disembarking, added to his other fears and discomforts, nearly unbalanced Dobson's mind; but he got through it, as men get through other disagreeable things in this world; and bright and early on Monday he found himself safely landed in the haven where he would be. He had passed an hour or two of untold mental agony when the gang plank had first touched the wharf; but no one seemed to take the slightest interest in him, and soon his fears began to wear off. He had been requested by the Custom House authorities to fill up a blank form with answers to some dozen of questions as to his birthplace, name, age, citizenship, position in the old world, ultimate destination, prospective occupation in the new one to which he had immigrated. He filled up this paper with a lot of answers to these questions which had just sufficient relevancy to the inquiries to permit him to pass, and, as may be imagined, with no very great regard to truth.

At last, having disposed of all the formalities incident to an immigrant's landing in the United States, and with a sigh of genuine relief, he was permitted to go about his business. He had given the name of Ferguson on the ship's papers, and at the Custom House; so he determined to stick to it for the present. He took his way, upon leaving Castle

Garden, to a cheap hotel not far away, where he changed his ship's clothing, took a bath, and generally freshened himself up after his long and uncomfortable voyage. Then he started out to take a look at the town. Not knowing anyone in the place, except his former correspondents, Messrs. Moulton & Smith, and not even knowing *these* gentlemen by sight, he felt perfectly safe from recognition. Curiosity, however, led him to take a look at the environment of a firm of the position he knew his friends to occupy, and, so, knowing their address upon Wall Street, he soon found himself looking for the names of his friends upon a directory of a large building bearing the number to which he had often addressed letters in his late dealings with them. There is a quality in the human mind which leads a man to enjoy getting as near as safety will admit to a possible danger. Having found the name he was looking for, it occurred to him to get into the elevator and take a nearer view of the offices of his late friends. There were a number of people already in the car when he entered it. It was about to start, when an old gentleman evidently wishing to catch it, called out to the attendant to wait for him. As the old gentleman passed by Dobson in entering, to find room in which to stand, another man who had been already standing in a corner of the car said to him in a low tone, but loud enough for Dobson to hear: "We've just had a cable from London, Mr. Moulton. The man has run away. Dunbar, I think, may be over here before long to inquire into matters. Its a very bad case, I fear."

Here the elevator stopped, and these gentlemen got out. Dobson remained where he was, going to the top of the building, where he alighted and walked down the stairway and into the street. He had heard quite enough in that short adventure to convince him that New York was no place for him to remain in. Dunbar might be running against him, or he against Dunbar, at almost any moment.

He returned to his hotel, inquired the departure for trains to Chicago, and, in an hour's time was seated in a Pullman car, bound for the West. Arrived at this town, he went to a *good* hotel this time, furbished up his general appearance, now, and began to look about him with a view to eventually settling in the place. A restless, unsettled feeling was upon him, however, the Nemesis of a disapproving conscience may have been the moving impulse; but, he felt that although Dunbar was almost certain to never trouble him in Chicago, that, before finally settling down, it might be as well to put another two or three hundred miles between himself and his possible pursuer: "One town is as good as another in this country," he said to himself, "so why be in any haste to settle in any, until I have seen more of the place?"

So he remained long enough to take a good look at Chicago, and then took a train for San Francisco. Remaining here for some weeks, and finally by this time feeling pretty confident that, even assuming Dunbar to be upon his trail, he had secured so long a start as to render it almost impossible for him to overtake him, he began to look about for some business opening. Being well furnished with money, he could afford to take his time; so he went to work very leisurely in the matter. He had put up at the Palace Hotel, registering under the name of Ferguson. He now took to reading the newspapers carefully, with a view to finding an advertisement which might lead to a business opening. He also cultivated the acquaintance of the people in the hotel, whom he found affable; and soon became a favorite in the place.

Feeling that the practice of law in a new country might offer many difficulties to a person unfamiliar with American jurisprudence, Dobson had determined to accept the first opening that came in his way to turn an honest dollar, without regard to his former training or experience.

One day, in conversation with a man he had met in the lobby of his hotel, the person asked him with true Western frankness: "Well, stranger, what's your game in California? What yer goin' to do?"

"I hadn't made up my mind," replied Dobson, somewhat amused at his companion's interest in him.

"What yer been brought up to, dry goods?"

"No, not exactly; and I'm not very particular as to what I go into, as long as its respectable and will afford me an occupation."

"Got some money, then, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, but what made you think of *that*?"

"Well, because no one goes into business in this country for simply occupation. Its *dollars*, and nothin' else."

"What line are *you* in, might I ask?"

"Oh, I'm in the mining business; like everyone else in my part of the country."

"Where's that?"

"Virginia City, Nevada."

"Well, are there any openings there for a man with a little capital, but with no knowledge of the business?"

"Lots of 'em. You come along with me, and I'll put you next to all the chances you want."

As Dobson came to know this man, whose name was Gardner, better, he appeared a bluff, honest kind of fellow, much to his taste; and almost unconsciously he found himself getting interested in the wonderful stories he heard of the Nevada mines. Finally, he asked permission to join Gardner, when he returned to Virginia City; which request being enthusiastically granted, he found himself on a train with his newly discovered friend, one afternoon, with all his belongings, and bound for what at that time was one of the most bustling mining centers of the world. It was in the times of the great excitement of the

Comstock Lode mines, and fortunes were being made and lost over night on the San Francisco Stock Exchange.

Arrived at Virginia City, Gardner recommended his friend to a fairly comfortable boarding house, promising him in due time to put him "next" to a good thing in the way of business. Dobson, still retaining the name of Ferguson, gradually adopted both the costume, the manners and customs of a mining town; and soon lost so entirely his former identity as to hardly recognize *himself*; let alone being recognizable to anyone else who had ever seen him. Before many days had gone over his head, Gardner, true to his word, introduced him to some men who were going to exploit a mining claim, and Dobson was finally induced to join forces with them.

So, among the kaleidoscopic changes in human life, here was rather a remarkable one: A London solicitor taken from the dingy surroundings of his former trade and set down in an American mining camp, and in the height of a mining excitement such as the world has seldom seen. Dobson found, however, that he was by no means alone in his experience. There were foreigners of every nationality to be found at Virginia City at that time. Many who had left their respective countries for their country's good; and of course, many of whom this was not true. But in any case, it was a bustling, crude, typically Western American life Dobson found himself in the midst of, and, for a man of his age and early associations, it was a somewhat difficult task to get accustomed to it.

His boarding-house keeper was a certain Mrs. Derringer, a widow, and a good deal of a character in her way. His fellow boarders were mostly mining men of rather the better class. That is, mine owners and superintendents, and their wives; rather than working men. As he came to know these people, he found among them a number whom he could easily learn to both like and respect. Mrs. Der-

ringer, for one, was a woman of most interesting personality. She either liked or disliked you at sight, and seldom changed her opinion. Reared amongst a rough environment and people, she had a natural refinement, which, while perhaps adapting itself to conditions as she found them, still remained a perfectly recognizable quantity in her make-up. She evidently did *not* take kindly to Dobson from the first, but took him into her establishment upon the recommendation of his friend, Mr. Gardner.

Mrs. Derringer's house was a very unpretentious affair. A wooden clapboarded house, of two stories, extending over considerable ground, and accommodating about twenty boarders. The dining room was a long, cheerless-looking apartment, with one table running the length of it. The cooking was good of its kind, but the kind was that which applied to a newly developed country, where more important matters than cooking and eating were supposed to occupy the public mind. Everything was in abundance, but the abundance itself was so much in evidence as at times to be oppressive, and to suggest the thought that a much less profuse supply of food, better served, would have been a welcome improvement. To Dobson's English ideas of cooking, there was altogether too much variety and too little plain roast beef and boiled mutton; too many kinds of tinned fruits and vegetables, where good honest boiled potatoes, turnips and cabbage would have been a more inviting bill of fare, according to his preconceived ideas. He got himself thoroughly disliked by venturing such an opinion, before he had been many days in the place; for Mrs. Derringer's table was a point not only of her religion, but of her most sensitive self-gratulation; and woe to the man, woman or child who found fault with it.

Dobson had invested some twenty thousand dollars in his mining venture; and had opened an account in a local bank with the rest of his loose money, with the exception of

a rather considerable sum in actual cash which he resolved to keep upon his person in case of an unlooked for necessity for sudden flight. This he had placed in a belt which he wore round his body next to his skin. His share in the enterprise into which he had put his money was represented by stock. A small company had been formed to take over an abandoned mining claim which the leaders in the undertaking hoped by the employment of new processes to convert into a paying property, as very many of such claims had become. Dobson had been made secretary of the company, with a nominal salary; a position of more dignity than usefulness, as judged from either the standpoint of his ability to look after his own or the interests of the company.

And here we will leave this worthy gentleman for the while, and return to London for the purpose of seeing how matters were progressing there.

CHAPTER X.

The first thing Dunbar did upon being restored to his proper position in the world was to call upon Dobson. The answer he received to his inquiry: "Is Mr. Dobson in?" was:

"Mr. Dobson is in Glasgow; sir, and left word if you would kindly make an appointment for, say, a few days from now, he will be glad to keep it."

"Did he leave an address?"

"Yes, sir; Central Hotel, Glasgow. But he should be home by to-morrow or the next day, sir, at the farthest; as he's been gone a week, and he said he should hardly remain over that time."

"Very well," replied Dunbar. "Then please take my card into Mr. Griggs."

Mr. Griggs was a fussy little man whom Dunbar had hardly ever met in his visits to the office. There was an air of suppression about this man and his surroundings, as Dunbar entered the room. Something was upon his mind.

"Sit down, Mr. Dunbar," said Griggs, nervously, and getting up to offer a chair. "You have come to inquire about Dobson, I suppose?"

"Yes, Mr. Griggs, I have. Your partner sent for me a week ago, but I was prevented from coming; and now I am told by your manager that he is out of town. It is very important that I see him. When do you expect him back?"

Mr. Griggs' answer to this question was to get up and go to the office door, open it suddenly, as if to assure himself that there was nobody listening, and then, after closing and locking it, to return to his seat. "Mr. Dunbar," he said, in an awe-stricken voice, "there is something very peculiar in Dobson's disap—absence. In the first place, he never told me he was going away. Then there have been a dozen callers here for him, whom I have had to see, and not one of them knew anything more of his proposed visit to Glasgow than *I* did. One of them, a man who knows as much or even more of Dobson's movements than I do, young Gow, was exceedingly troubled and surprised when he heard the news, and immediately both wrote and telegraphed to Dobson at the Central Hotel, Glasgow, only to find that Dobson had not been there at all."

"That certainly has a very singular appearance, Mr. Griggs," said Dunbar in considerable alarm.

"Yes, it has, Mr. Dunbar; but that is not the end of it: Although, as you are probably aware, I have nothing whatever to do with Mr. Dobson's department of the business, in his absence, I, of course, am compelled to answer questions, and to do what I can to ease matters over until his return. Two or three days ago in getting at some bills which were due for payment, I had occasion to go to a compartment of our safe to which Dobson has always carried the key. He has always been careful to leave this key when he has gone away, up to this time; but he failed to do so in this instance; and I was forced to send for a locksmith to have it opened. What do you think I found?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"A bundle of old newspapers."

"Good God, Mr. Griggs, but in that safe, to my own knowledge, were kept a large number of *my* valuable securities. You don't mean to say that *they* are missing?"

"I am very sorry to say, Mr. Dunbar, that I *do* mean to

say that very thing. Whatever papers you had in that safe are missing; and I was only in hopes you had come to tell me that you had taken them away long before Dobson's disappearance."

"On the contrary, I came to-day to get them. Something has told me, it has come to me, that matters were not going by any means smoothly with Mr. Dobson, and I have been very much alarmed. Have you made a careful inspection to ascertain if my papers were not to be found in some other place in the safe, or in the office?"

"Yes, Mr. Dunbar, I have spent hours, days, I might say, in just such a search."

"Well, and what did you find?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"But this is a serious matter, Mr. Griggs!"

"Unfortunately you have not heard the end of it yet, Mr. Dunbar."

"Good God, what next?"

"You had a rather large sum of ready money in Dobson's hands, had you not?"

"Yes, some forty to fifty thousand pounds."

"Well, I fear it is all gone."

"What?"

"I find that Dobson has lost heavily in his transactions for some years past. He must have been very deeply in debt when your property came into his hands. By means of your money, he has evidently been able for some time to recuperate a little; but some very shady men, like Gow, and two or three others I could name, have evidently been using him as a financial cat's-paw in their bill transactions, and have had him in their power, until a crisis arrived which he could not meet; and, I am pained to say it, but I fear my partner has run away!"

The little man, who was evidently perfectly honest in his expression of surprise and horror at the position he

found himself in, now almost collapsed, and, for a moment Dunbar almost forgot his own anxieties in his solicitude for the man sitting before him.

As a result of this interview, a general investigation, not only into Dobson's affairs but into those of the firm to which he belonged was instituted, from which it became painfully evident that the concern was hopelessly bankrupt. Dobson had completely gutted it. By this failure Dunbar not only lost a large sum of money and a quantity of valuable securities, but the deeds to his place in the country and to his house in town. Dobson had made a clean sweep of everything; even of things which could be of no possible value to him, but the loss of which would put their owners to the greatest possible inconvenience. The question now arose as to what was to be done. Incidentally Dunbar's old friend Inspector Evans was called in for consultation. As showing that the police are sometimes very much at sea for a departure in following up a case like this, Inspector Evans gave it as his opinion that Dobson had not yet left London. "London is the best place in the world for a man to hide in," he said, in a professional tone of voice, "Rest assured he will remain quietly in London for some days, until he thinks we have stopped looking for him, and then he will take a run over to Paris and hide *there* for awhile."

"Where will he go then?" asked Dunbar.

"Probably to Spain; possibly to South America."

"Why not to the United States?"

"Oh, well, because, for one reason, he'd expect us to be lookin' for 'im there."

"So his saying he'd gone to Glasgow was only a blind?"

"To be sure," said the Inspector, almost contemptuously. "That's done every day."

And so they had it, to and fro; the matter boiling itself down finally into *this*: If Dunbar was willing to make a

formal complaint, and then to follow the matter up actively with money and vindictiveness, something in the way of a clue might be found which would ultimately lead to a capture; but, failing in this, nothing would be done. Of course, if Inspector Evans should meet Dobson in the streets of London, and should recognize him, he would arrest him; but this was hardly likely. Dunbar thought the matter carefully over, and then concluded to do *nothing*. He had had a little taste of what arrest and imprisonment meant; and he had a fellow-feeling for a man, however guilty he might be, who was to come within the pale of the criminal law. He was not vindictive. Dobson's arrest, even if accomplished, would hardly restore his property; while it would injure *his* innocent family. No, Dobson, for all he should do to detain him, might go to the ends of the world, and remain there. He would be punished enough in his exile.

Of course, he tried to save all he could from the wreck; and in this effort he was ably seconded by Mr. Griggs, who proved himself an honest man, as well as a deeply injured one. But, with the very best intentions in the world, nothing can come of nothing; and that was all there was to it. Dunbar found himself pitying the man far more than he blamed him, and ended up by privately settling a small annuity upon him to keep himself and family out of the poor house. As to his saving anything, he saw the case was absolutely hopeless; and he wisely gave up trying.

The effect of this upheaval upon Gow and his friends had been disastrous indeed. In Dobson's disappearance not only had these men lost their cat's-paw; they had lost the chestnut and the hot stove as well. Credit had been running very low with them for a long time back, but Dobson's name had always been one to conjure with, for the reason that he being in the mud quite as much as Gow

and his friends were in the mire, in his efforts to save himself he was unavoidably assisting in saving them. Of course Gow and his friends had well known that a crisis was approaching. Nothing else could be expected from the long continued run of bad luck they had been having: losses at cards, losses on the turf, heavy, and ever increasing expenses of all kinds; and, finally, an almost complete stoppage of credit in every quarter. And now Dobson had failed them. Had turned up missing. Had, in plain terms, run away, defaulted. In all their speculations as to what he would probably do when the climax arrived, *this* had not occurred to them; or if at all, but vaguely.

As matters stood now, something would have to be done, and that right speedily, or very serious consequences stared them in the face. As their whole reliance in the matter of raising the wind had for a long time been grounded upon bill discounting, and, as all sources of discount had now dried up by reason of Dobson's defalcation, the only hope for the future lay in, first, getting a new supply of bills; second, in finding a place in which to discount them. Both of these expedients, as matters now stood, were extremely difficult of accomplishment. Their own names had been "blown upon" from Dan to Beersheba in the financial circle of London; which has been described as an exceedingly small one, but as "a circle of fire!" For discredited men to go to people who had howsoever little financial standing left and ask them to lend their assistance in making up a batch of bills for the market, was like the blind leading the blind; and yet something of the kind had to be done, and done at once, or all these lively young blades, of whom Gow was "*facile princeps*," would end up in Queer Street; and in the very shadiest part of that shady street, at that.

Gow had a small office at the top of one of the rather shabby buildings in Great St. Helens. He and lord Ven-

nor were sitting in it, one day about this time, discussing their affairs:

"I assume that you could no more do a little bill than you could lift the national debt, my lord?" said Gow.

"You assume correctly, my boy," answered his lordship.

"And you know as well where to find some new bills as I do, and that's nowhere."

"Correct again."

"Vennor," said Gow, turning and looking the young man full in the face, "there's no earthly good in telling you again that something's got to be done; for you know *that* as well as I do. You and I will soon have a choice between leaving England for a rather indefinitely protracted time, or of spending some months in the debtor's side of Holloway Castle. Now, I don't know how it strikes you, but *I* do not like either prospect particularly well; and I'm going to make some kind of a move to avoid both of them. The question is, have you sand enough in your crop to join forces with me, or will you take your own chances of finding a way out of your difficulties?"

"I could answer that question much more intelligently if I knew your plan," said Vennor, in a half sulky, half suspicious tone.

"And I don't propose to fully state my plan," said Gow, "until you agree to come into it; so what are we to do?"

"I don't know."

It was summer time, and the office windows looking into the court were open. The young men sat gloomily looking at the church, and watching a man who was engaged in raking the paths in the little enclosure about it.

"It's needless to say," said Gow, after rather a long pause, "that no ordinary scheme is going to answer in our case. Something out of the ordinary it's got to be to save our necks. So much of my plan I'm willing to tell you."

"You might as well tell me *nothing*, for I knew as much as that already."

"Well, I'll go just as much farther as to say that my plan includes something that, under certain conditions, would be called rather a hard name. That's positively as far as I shall go, however, until you make up your mind, once and for all whether or no you are with me in the plan."

"I think I know what you mean, Gow," answered his companion," with rather a frightened look, "and don't go any farther until I ask you a question: 'Supposing your plan to be what I think it is, wouldn't it be much better for me *not* to know it?' I mean, of course, by that, couldn't I be of more use to you in assisting you to carry out your plan, whatever it is, by being absolutely ignorant of what you are about?"

Gow thought a moment. "If I could feel perfectly sure you would never round on me in case of trouble, yes; but, if you were to try to get out of any responsibility in the matter by putting your own share as well as mine on my shoulders, why, no," he answered.

"That's exactly what I'm getting at," said Vennor. "If I absolutely know nothing of your plan, I shall *have* no responsibility, and therefore cannot shift it upon you or anyone else."

"In other words, you are willing to reap your share of the advantage of my plan without taking your share of the risk? Not if I know it!"

"Very well, then, count me out; and go ahead on your own lines," said Vennor, coolly, at the same time rising from his seat, as if about to leave the room.

"Wait a moment, my lord," said Gow, nervously, "we may be able to come to terms in this matter, yet. Answer me one question: 'If I should supply you with an absolutely good bill, could you get it done?'"

"Yes, I have no doubt I could."

"And if, after a time, there should anything be found out about the bill—"

"Stop there, Gow," said Vennor, with an imperious gesture. "You have asked your question, and I have answered it. I could discount an absolutely good bill. Now, let it go at that. It will be much better for you and me to bring this conversation to a close where it is. When you get your absolutely good bill, bring it to me, and I will endorse it and have it discounted, upon the usual terms, of course, an equal division of the spoils. But it must be absolutely *good*, mind you."

And here his lordship got up and left the office, leaving Gow to his reflections.

"I think its safe enough," he said to himself. "The beggar knows perfectly well what I mean; and, knowing that, he can't very well split upon me. Besides, there really is nothing to say; that is, any *more* to say than it would be perfectly natural for him to say under the circumstances. Forgery has an ugly sound, it is true; but many forged bills are discounted by our banks, and are paid at maturity, and it is never known that they were forged. The thing is to always be ready with the coin to pay such a bill and take it out of the bank's hands the moment they begin to smell anything wrong about it."

Saying this, Gow went to his desk, rummaged about awhile, and finally extracted a bundle of letters. He opened them, carefully examined the writing in them, particularly the signatures; and then, taking his pen, he began to carefully imitate the writing.

In the meantime, Dunbar had been looking farther into his affairs, and had come to the conclusion that the only thing left for him to do was to go immediately to New York for the purpose of consulting his agents there, Messrs. Moulton and Smith. Large remittances were due at any

time now, and he had cabled these gentlemen to refrain from sending them until further orders, or until he could see them in person. He then put his affairs into such condition as to be able to leave them temporarily, notified his mother and sisters of his intended trip, booked his passage on a Cunard steamer sailing from Liverpool, and in a short time was following quite unconsciously in the footsteps of Dobson across the Atlantic; only, under rather more favorable conditions. Arrived in New York, he looked up his friends, who were surprised enough at the tale he had to tell them of the rascality of their London friends.

Of course, the hole made in his fortune by Dobson's defalcation was, in proportion to its extent and size, a small matter. Some hundreds of thousands of dollars would probably cover the loss, always excepting, the inconvenience, the wear and tear upon one's nerves of such an experience and the necessity of making new arrangements as to the management of his affairs. The more he saw of his New York agents, the more reason he found to be perfectly satisfied with them. They were evidently gentlemen of high standing in the community, and of tried honesty. Moreover, of course, they were thoroughly conversant with his estate from long familiarity with its details. He therefore resolved to go on as he had before, implicitly trusting these men; while resolving to be his own manager at the London end of the line for the future. Taking advantage of his stay in New York, Dunbar now proceeded to go over with Mr. Moulton the schedule of his properties and investments, and, as far as possible, to personally inspect each piece of land. During this inspection he was repeatedly amazed at the extent of his possessions, and the prospective increase in their values. New York then, as it is to-day, was advancing by leaps and bounds towards the northern end of the island; and Dunbar could see

with half an eye that his property would go on doubling up in value to a fabulous extent. Not being a particularly avaricious person, he took as much, but no more, interest in all this as became a well-bred young Englishman who had yet to become Americanized into expressing a very great enthusiasm for the acquisition of real estate. He had now quite as much as he needed; why ask or wish for more? Interesting, even exciting, as Mr. Moulton's prophesies were as to the probable price at which such and such a piece of land would sell, some of these days, Dunbar could never be moved to say more than, "Oh, ah, really," or words to that effect.

One day, while in the upper part of the island looking over some lots Mr. Moulton had advised him to use some loose money he had in buying, Dunbar looking rather bored, and uninterested, Moulton said to him, "Mr. Dunbar, I fear you have something on your mind. Would it be presuming too much to ask you what it is?"

"Not at all, Mr. Moulton," the young man replied, smiling. "I was thinking of the brave women I have robbed of all this wealth, and wondering how they were getting on, and whether or no they have ever forgiven me."

"It would be an easy matter to have that question answered by the ladies themselves, my young friend; for we are at present within a five minutes walk of their home, and I feel sure enough of my ground to say that they would be very glad to see you, if you did them the honor of calling upon them."

"With all my heart, Mr. Moulton; nothing in life would give me greater pleasure. Only, you understand, I should be pained to think that I should in any way offend them, or run any chance of offending them, by my real and unaffected interest in their welfare. Perhaps it would be better, for this reason, to defer our visit until after you have seen and ascertained their pleasure in the matter."

"I have already done so, Mr. Dunbar, and I can assure you that they will be as pleased to see you, as you will be to see them."

The matter having been thus happily settled, they now bent their steps in the direction of the Murphys' home. Arriving at the entrance gate, Dunbar's quick eye immediately took in the general air of dilapidation which had settled upon all the surroundings, and which has already been described. His heart, always open to such impressions, began to bleed for the gentlewomen whose high sense of honor had made him a rich man at such a cost to themselves. The gate itself which had been proudly swung open to admit splendid equipages and fine ladies and gentlemen in its day, now hung to its stone gate-post by only one rusty hinge, and was with the greatest difficulty induced to open at all. Once inside the grounds, the indications of decadent opulence multiplied at every turn. It was a sorrowful sight to anyone; but to the man who felt he had much reason to consider himself the cause of it, it came as a revelation indeed. They reached the house, rang the door bell, and waited patiently on the porch for some one to answer their summons. Mr. Moulton, having had this experience before, explained the seeming inhospitality of their reception in a manner highly creditable to his inherent goodness of heart. "You must excuse it, Mr. Dunbar," he said, after they had waited some five to ten minutes with no prospect whatever of gaining admission to the house. "The ladies are not accustomed to receiving calls, and the servants have gradually fallen into slovenly ways of receiving visitors. Our welcome will be none the less hearty, however, on this account."

"I am sure of it," replied Dunbar, cheerily, "and I only regret troubling such estimable and noble women as I know your friends to be."

As Dunbar said this, the door was opened by the uncompromising old family servant, who by this time had come to recognize in Mr. Moulton a person who need no longer be as carefully watched as hitherto; and the gentlemen were admitted.

CHAPTER XI.

Many years after the event, Dunbar, in speaking of it, said: "The entrance of Helena Murphy into the room where Mr. Moulton and I were sitting was far more than an ordinary occurrence. It was her entrance into my life. Never had I experienced such a thrill in meeting a woman before. Whether it was that Fate had busied herself in preparing both our minds, hers and mine, for the communion which was ours afterwards, or whether it was the incomparable charm and presence of the woman herself, I know not. All I know is that I recognized my destiny in Helena Murphy the moment I saw her, as fully and as completely as I have recognized it ever since. Possibly, the admiration I had felt for her as the result of her and her mother's noble treatment of me, may have been a determining factor in the case; but I think not, or only partially so. There must surely have been something else; for the nobility of her conduct had appealed to only one of my senses; whereas she herself appealed to *all* of them! If she were not in truth the most beautiful woman in the world, she certainly was so to me. If she were not the most queenly creature in the world, at least she was such to me. If she were not the most lovable, charming, frank, open, ingenuous, loyal, tender, fearless, honest, sincere person in the world, she appeared all of these to me; and has appeared so ever since!"

"And so you don't look upon me altogether as a rob-

ber?" Dunbar had said, after he had been duly presented to the ladies.

"By no means, Mr. Dunbar," replied Helena, looking towards her mother, as if for a confirmation of what she was saying. "You have only come by your own; and we had the pleasure of helping you to come by it. That's all."

"Yes, my dear Miss Murphy, but who would have had the honesty to spend years of time and no end of money in endeavoring to find a man who was going to strip them of wealth which might so easily have been their's?"

"Oh, but that was a matter of simple honesty, Mr. Dunbar. No honest person could have done less; and, as it is, we are still in your debt, owing to the generous provision you have made for us."

"I really think you young people would do well to strike out into some other field of discussion," broke in Mr. Moulton, here, "for, knowing both sides of this whole matter as I do, I can justly say the honors were easy. It was a real delight, measured from the standpoint of a lawyer's daily experience of such affairs, to find two parties to a transaction which was enriching the one and impoverishing the other, so unselfish, so easily accommodated, and so anxious to do all that was right and proper; to his own loss, and to the other's gain."

"Thank you, Mr. Moulton," said both Helena and Dunbar, at a breath, and then Dunbar went on: "I recognize the delicacy of your advice in suggesting another topic of conversation, Mr. Moulton, as I am well aware that business matters are not as a rule to be discussed in the presence of ladies; but I will confess now to an ulterior purpose in coming to New York, besides the apparent one; and that was to secure an opportunity to lay before Mrs. Murphy and her daughter the grateful tribute of my admiration of their noble conduct; and I fear that even you, my kind friend, could hardly prevail against my doing so."

Anyone intently watching Helena's face as Dunbar said these words could not have failed to see the flush of gratified pride and pleasure which mantled upon her cheeks; or the light that came into her eyes. All the more so, that she was by no means a demonstrative person, but rather the reverse. There is, however, a common ground upon which noble and kindred souls meet, and love to meet; an atmosphere in which both breathe freely; a plane upon which they mingle in the equality of their common nobility, and freely recognize each other. Such a communion and such a meeting had been theirs. It might take a week, or a month, or a year to mature the flower that had that day been planted in their hearts; but nothing could prevent it from maturing; and nothing did.

Dunbar came away from this visit with a new and absorbing interest in his life. Even Moulton, keen, cold man of the law that he was, saw it; and seemed to be pleased through and through at the turn matters had taken. It was not until many years afterwards that the old gentleman frankly confessed the little plot by which he had brought the two young people together. It was no accident by which they had been near the Murphys' home when Dunbar had spoken of his desire to be presented to the ladies. Unconsciously he had already been near it upon several previous occasions, in the carrying out of Mr. Moulton's little plan of action; but the latter had judiciously waited for the young man to speak. There was a residuum of romance in the old gentleman's make-up which his long dealings with the world had failed to obliterate. He was proud and happy at the success of his efforts. "It was a grand stroke," he said, in speaking of the matter, upon the occasion referred to. "It was the proper, and logical and natural ending of the story, the union of two noble souls; and I thank God that I was made His humble instrument in carrying it out."

"Yes, but you might have told me what a fine girl she was," Dunbar had replied to this remark. "Just think of the time I had lost which might have been so much better employed."

"Perhaps so," said the old man, with an inward chuckle, "but you would never have discovered this peerless woman half so effectively through my eyes as you did through your own."

Dunbar had taken apartments at the Clarendon Hotel, Union Square; in those days a highly respectable and exclusive house. Not being engaged in any more pressing business than an inspection of his affairs, he now resolved to make it his business to cultivate the acquaintance of Helena Murphy to the exclusion of every other interest in his life. There were some difficulties in the way; in the first place, the young lady and her mother had been so long out of the world that it was a task of no mean dimensions to bring them back into it. They had evidently become wedded to their solitude, and seemed reluctant to have it disturbed. Then, there being no man in the family, a thousand and one little opportunities for impromptu visits and other social happenings and accidents were wanting. More than this, there was pride; family pride and poverty pride. The Murphys in their day and generation had been considerable people in town. They were in reduced circumstances now, it was true; but their pride was as active as ever. Then, Mrs. Murphy was a very old lady by this time; and to the disabilities of age and failing strength was added the dislike that old age so often evinces for new faces and changed conditions. In a word, Dunbar found himself somewhat in a position of a man who had discovered a gold-mine in an inaccessible country: While fully alive to its value, its possession was of little use to him until he could extract his treasure from the ground and get it to market.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle of all that lay in his way was the high mindedness of the young lady herself, whose pride would take instant alarm at anything that smacked of condescension upon the part of young Dunbar. She had been glad to see him in the first instance, partly from motives of gratitude, partly from those of curiosity, partly because their old family lawyer and friend had wished to present him. All this had been happily accomplished now, and the incident was closed. To reopen, and to keep it open would require some finesse; but Dunbar was not a man to be easily discouraged, especially when his heart was enlisted, as it certainly was in this instance. The thing that troubled him now was where and how to begin. In those days the means of communication between the lower and upper ends of Manhattan Island were meagre. Of course, he could drive or ride, but that necessitated a good deal of formality. A horse or carriage had probably not entered the driveway to the Murphys' home for years. Such an entrance now would constitute an event in the family history which would be talked of for as many more. A casual and unannounced call, while strolling in the vicinity of the place would startle the family, all the way from the old watch dog, through the two old servants, up to the ladies themselves in a manner to entirely strip it of its ease and naturalness; besides frightening away the very bird he was setting his snares to catch. "In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird."

Upon leaving the ladies upon the occasion of his first call, they had politely asked him to call again, it was true; but any one could see with half an eye that the invitation was rather perfunctory. Fate, however, through the instrumentality of Mr. Moulton, removed at one stroke one of our hero's greatest difficulties; namely, the distance between himself and the lady of his choice. Moulton had a country place so near the Murphys' as at one time to

have formed a portion of the original farm settled upon by the Hammonds. In fact, a portion of the two estates adjoined each other now. One day, as Dunbar was in Mr. Moulton's office, the latter spoke up and said: "Mr. Dunbar, come and stop with us for a few weeks in the country. The change of air will do you good, and both Mrs. Moulton and I would be delighted to have you with us."

Such an invitation, under such conditions, was not to be declined; and in due time Dunbar found himself within a very easy distance of his lady-bird's nest; and then began his real endeavor to get still nearer. In this he was aided and abetted by Mrs. Moulton, who, it appeared, was a match-maker; as very many of her sex are. This kindly old lady, to begin with, had insisted upon Dunbar's calling with her upon the Murphys in such a cosy and informal manner as to place matters upon a surer footing for a continuance of his advance upon the entrenchments than months of patient waiting or of strategy would have accomplished, if left to himself. Of course, during this call it transpired that Dunbar was staying with the Murphys' neighbors, the Moultons; which, naturally enough, was notice to Helena and her mother that they were expected to do something to help entertain the young man. Now, as anything in the way of social doings was practically impossible, situated as the Murphys were, and as it was almost equally impossible for Helena to leave her mother for any length of time, nothing of a formal nature was attempted by anyone in the way of intercourse between the two families; but, possibly, for this very reason, both families tacitly came to an agreement to remove rather than to maintain all the barriers that stood in the way of an interchange of *informal* civilities. The ladies called upon each other almost daily, and upon the

occasion of those calls Dunbar was pretty sure to be present at either the one house or the other.

The time was summer, and everything made it pleasant for Dunbar to stroll about the country lanes that existed at that time. Upon one of these walks he had inadvertently come to that portion of Mr. Moulton's land which adjoined the Murphys'; for, in looking over the fence his eye rested upon an old and very much neglected garden. In the garden there stood a rustic building, which in its day must have had certain pretensions to beauty; but its day had long since past. In a summer-house there sat a young lady intent upon a book, and a careful inspection of the young lady revealed no less a person than Helena Murphy. Now, to the ordinary, everyday sort of young man, the first impulse would have urged him to climb the fence, which was an easy enough thing to do, it being by no means a high one, and, to present himself to the young lady seated in the arbor, as a perfectly natural and proper thing to do. But here Dunbar's early training restrained him. He had been brought up in England; where young people are seldom allowed to be alone with each other unless they are related. Then again, he had an idea, probably a correct one, that it would require only a very slight error of either taste or judgment upon his part to dissipate any possible chances he might have in the direction of winning the young lady whose back he could see at present turned towards him, in entire unconsciousness of his presence. Whatever he might have dared in the pursuit of an ordinary acquaintance with an ordinary young woman, he could afford to take no risks with this one. Helena was to him hedged about by the sanctity of maidenly reserve, just now, as much as if she had been in her boudoir, or even her dressing room. Her attitude of perfect self-abandonment suggested a feeling of absolute security from observation which had become all the more secure from long

custom and absence of intrusion. To ruthlessly break in upon and surprise such maidenly privacy would be a gross breach of good manners, to put it mildly; or so it appeared to Dunbar.

Very reluctantly, therefore, he was turning away, resolved to some day playfully allude to the summer-house, and possibly thereby secure admission to it, when an incident occurred which gave an unexpected turn to the affair: Upon entering the field within which he was now standing he had noticed a bull, but at such a distance from him as to negative any idea of danger from him. Upon turning round, now, however, intending to beat a silent retreat, he was astonished to find that while his attention had been directed towards the garden and its occupant, the bull had so far shifted his position as to be now standing in absolutely the best strategic spot he could have chosen for cutting off Dunbar's retreat; that is, his retreat in the direction he would have preferred to take it. More than this, the bull was evidently in no trifling mood; but, on the contrary, showed every sign of an instant opening up of hostilities. He had, in fact, evidently been quietly waiting for Dunbar to turn round, so that he could have a good look at him, as a signal for his attack. Nothing could have happened to more clearly and fully explain Helena's feeling of perfect security from intrusion from the quarter from which Dunbar had approached her bower. She well knew that she had a sentinel on guard upon whom she could rely; and she had given herself no possible anxiety upon *that* score.

Now Dunbar was brave enough, but here was an instance where unquestionably other qualities than personal courage came into play. In a twinkling of an eye he had measured the distance to be crossed in traversing the field in the direction he had started to go, and had perceived the utter impossibility of making it before the bull would

be upon him. In fact, he was upon him already; and with a bellow which went far to say, "I'll teach you to meddle with my affairs, young man," the animal lowered his head and charged him. Under the circumstances Dunbar did the only thing there was left for him to do; he retreated in the direction of the Murphys' garden, in not altogether good order, at that; and soon found himself upon the desirable side of the fence, *in* the Murphys' garden, and also standing in the presence of the young lady he had only a few brief minutes ago been fleeing from. Helena had heard the roar of the angry bull, had looked up from her book, had taken in the position of affairs at a glance, and had instinctively hastened to the scene of action.

"You have had a narrow escape, Mr. Dunbar," she said, as soon as she recovered from the effect of her first fright. "That animal has already severely injured several people, and has only been kept in this field because it was supposed to be so remote from any thoroughfare as to make it improbable that anyone would attempt to pass this way."

"From which accident, I am afraid, I must measure the extent of my trespass, Miss Murphy; but my apology is that I had no idea, I could have had none, that in following the path I had taken I was in any way destined to intrude upon *your* privacy. I trust you will forgive me, and, if you will kindly show me any way of leaving you which will obviate the necessity of facing that pugnacious animal, I will take my departure immediately."

There is in every difficult situation a natural and a strained way of getting out of it. It is true that people usually select the latter; but there are exceptions to this rule, and Helena was the exception. It was a summer's day. Dunbar looked hot and uncomfortable, the vine-covered retreat she had just left looked cool and inviting. There was no earthly reason why she should *not* do it,

and a good many reasons why she *should*; so, motioning the way to Dunbar, she invited him to her bower, where they were soon comfortably seated. She had taken the obvious and natural way out of the dilemma, as a sensible woman of her stamp might be relied upon to do.

To see them seated side by side in the shade of vine and tree, the young man, a fine fellow, well made, blond, blue-eyed, clean looking, modest in appearance and manner; in a word, the best type of the English youth, and the young woman, tall, stately, dark, somewhat reserved, one would have said they were a couple in a thousand, and as fully intended for each other as if they had been respectively the last and only man and woman left upon the earth; as Adam and Eve were the first.

"And now, Mr. Dunbar, you may tell me, if you like, how we Americans impress you?" Helena began, after they were comfortably seated.

"Well, Miss Murphy, you see, or possibly, you *don't* see, but it is true, nevertheless," Dunbar answered, "you put me in rather an awkward predicament in asking me such a question. Its like a man receiving an invitation from the queen; its a command. I'm bound to answer it whether I like or dislike."

Helena smiled. "I had no idea of the seriousness of the question, or I assure you I should not have asked it; but, as you have now excited my curiosity, and as I can't very well withdraw the question, I'm afraid you will have to answer it."

"Its a little cruel, I think you will admit, but, if you adhere to your command I am too good a subject to disobey; but don't hold me responsible if you don't like my answer."

"I'm afraid, from the way you go about it, you're going to say something disparaging to my country people, and

I'm almost sorry now I didn't withdraw the question, after all."

"It's too late now; and this is my answer: In putting *you* forward as a specimen of American womanhood, Miss Murphy, your country people have lost all the chance of winning my approval they ever had; for all the other women must suffer by contrast."

"My question included the men as well as the women," replied Helena, coloring slightly, however, as if she had by no means lost the intended compliment.

"Oh, well, as to the men, they can take care of themselves. Some I like, and some I dislike, as always happens; not only in America, but all the world over."

"So, then, I am to understand that your interest confines itself exclusively to the *women* of our country, am I?"

This answer, simple enough in itself as it was, supplied Dunbar with an inspiration; or it set him to thinking, and the thinking soon led up to the inspiration, as often happens. His thought expressed in words was this: "As some day I fully intend to ask this woman to be my wife, why not now, as well as any other time? By George, I'll do it."

As has already been said, it was in the summer time; but it was late summer, and already a few stray fallen leaves betrayed the approach of autumn, while the golden sunshine was just mellowing with the purple haze which gilds its speedy departure. In a few short weeks it would be gone, and all Nature would begin her preparations for the ensuing winter. If any season of the year suggests the warmth, the glow of the cosy fireside, the delight of home, the perfect bond of love, it is this. Inversely, as Nature divests herself of her summer raiment and prepares to go into mourning for the winter, man rejoices in his heart at the picture of the home life which winter brings with it. That is, the man whose heart is right. If such a man

ever feels the need of companionship and love, it is when all Nature seems able to get on without it. He grows warm as she grows cold. Then Dunbar took a furtive glance at Helena. There she sat, as yet, certainly, to all outward appearing, totally unconscious of what was going on in his mind. His unforeseen intrusion upon her privacy had surprised her in a simple calico dress, exquisitely fresh and suited to her, to be sure; but *not* the toilette in which she would have received him, if it had been left to her choice. There she sat in the dilapidated summer-house in the midst of the neglected garden. In a few short weeks the leaves would begin to fall in earnest. The last remaining summer flowers which now were so bright and full of perfume, would all too soon become dry and unsightly stalks, upon which the frost and rime of winter would cling as a winding sheet upon a skeleton. A neglected garden symbolizes a lonely and neglected heart at all times, but never so much as in winter. Had all this been seen and felt by Helena? No one in God's world could answer that question but she herself; and she *would* not. Then Dunbar looked into the future, *her* future. In a short time at the best this gracious woman would be left absolutely alone in the world; for her mother was well-stricken in years. Could anything in the prospect, in Helena's prospect of the future be more utterly dismal and depressing than the thought of what her life would be in that empty, silent house, surrounded by that neglected garden when she came to be left alone in the world? As it was, her life was lonely; what would it be *then*?

All these things flashed through the young man's mind, together, naturally enough, with the thought of the risk he ran in putting his fortune to the touch with no more notice than he was giving the unsuspecting girl who sat demurely before him. However, he was not a man to draw back, once having made up his mind: "Yes, Miss

Murphy," he now replied to that young lady's question as to his exclusive interest in the women of the country, "Yes, I confess to that, and I will confess to even more. My interest in the American woman has concentrated itself upon *you*, among not only the women of America, but the women of all the world. So much so, in fact, that I have made up my mind to make you my wife, at any cost. Possibly this may appear to you rather an abrupt manner of speaking of such an important matter, but it is no more abrupt than the manner in which the animal in the adjacent field ushered me into your presence a short time ago; for which act, although unpremeditated, I thank him with all my heart. It was an augury of the most beneficent kind to me, and I accept it joyfully, as I place myself, together with the fortune of which I have stripped you and your poor mother at your feet. Nay, hear me out." Helena had made a movement as if intending to retire from the scene; but Dunbar gently held her back as he went on:

"Now, Helena, listen to me; for, if ever a man was in earnest, I am that man. I have made up my mind to take you back to England with me as my wedded wife. I swear to you that I shall never return to England without you, and I shall never give up my suit for you. I love you; I *have* loved you ever since I came to know anything of the nobility of your character; and I shall go on loving you until the end of time; so you might as well take pity upon me now as at any other time, and put me out of my misery."

Here, the enthusiastic young man seized both of Helena's hands, and raising them to his lips kissed them as reverently as if they had been a saint's. No living man has ever fathomed a woman's heart, and no living man, it is pretty safe to say, ever will. Admitting this statement, at any rate, for the sake of argument, it paves the

way to go farther and state with equal confidence that no living man can tell how a woman wishes to be approached upon the most eventful epoch of her life; the epoch which is to transform her from a maiden into a wife. There must have been something in Helena's heart which responded to and understood Dunbar's method of approach; for she evinced very little astonishment proportionately to the extreme suddenness of the attack; but, on the contrary, appeared to rather like it.

"There is one thing you appear to have overlooked, Mr. Dunbar, in your declaration," she said quietly, "and that is that, situated as I am in the world, you will have to practically marry my mother with me; for I neither could or would ever think of deserting her in her old age."

"I have thought of that, Helena; and the matter shall be arranged entirely in accordance with your wishes. And now kindly say you accept me, and don't keep me any longer upon my knees; for I shall never get up until you do."

"Well," said Helena, with a smile, "I suppose that's the only way out of a rather awkward dilemma, as we certainly cannot remain as we are for the rest of our lives; but, remember, you must take my mother with me; for I shall never, never leave her."

"Yes, and if you happen to have a *grandmother*, I will marry her with the rest, for I am in a marrying mood to-day!"

Saying which, the young man took Helena lovingly to his heart, and kissed her. And this is the faithful story of how Patrick Dunbar won his bride.

CHAPTER XII.

The news of the engagement carried joy to the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Moulton; but, quite naturally, was not so enthusiastically received by Mrs. Murphy. Mr. and Mrs. Moulton did their best to induce the old lady to look upon the announcement from the view-point of the good of her child, and so far succeeded as to extract from her a rather perfunctory consent; but it was clear that her heart was not in it. It seems, however, to be one of the kindly offices of Nature to prepare the shoulders that are to receive the loads she intends to lay upon them, and also to properly apportion their weight. So, in due time, this difficulty was disposed of, and Dunbar was received into the Murphy household as an accepted suitor; and many a happy hour he spent in the old summer-house in the midst of the neglected garden.

The greatest obstacle to his marrying at all, let alone marrying a stranger in a strange land, he was well aware would arise from the opposition of his mother and sisters. Nor was he disappointed of his expectation in this regard. In answer to his announcement of his approaching marriage, there came a very vigorous protest upon the part of his mother, and, as an echo of it, letters from both his sisters, begging him in rather vague and general terms not to throw himself away upon "those designing American women, who were doubtless only after his money."

Now, although under the terms of his father's will, he was the heir and the head of the house, his mother and

sisters had certain provisions made for their support, and other rights which he considered himself bound to respect. He therefore set himself to securing their approval of his marriage; fully intending, however, to marry whether or no.

Summer passed, gave place to autumn, and autumn was about to yield to winter, before all these somewhat conflicting forces were so accommodated as to admit of his solemnizing his marriage in the full light of an approving conscience. But, finally, as a result of his inflexible purpose and promise to Helena never to return to England without her, the ceremony was performed and Dunbar took his wife to his arms. Situated as they were, there could be no wedding trip. The wedding had taken place very quietly at the Murphys' home, and now the honeymoon was to be spent there. The old garden, by this time in its winter garb, looked more desolate and deserted than ever; but inside, the house, although poorly furnished and antiquated, was made as welcoming as possible for the young people; for, Dunbar, true to his promise again, respected his wife's wishes in the matter of allowing her to remain with her mother. As nothing short of an earthquake could have dislodged the old lady from her accustomed quarters, Dunbar resolved to patiently wait for the earthquake.

It came in the spring in the shape of the poor old gentleman's death; and, at last, having in every possible way acted the part of a man both of feeling and of honor in the fulfilment of his anti-nuptial promises, he was free to return to England with his wife. The two old servants and the dog were left to take care of the old home, and the young couple made arrangements for their departure.

Before leaving New York Dunbar had become so familiar with the condition of his own affairs and so perfectly convinced of the loyalty of his agent, Mr. Moulton, that

he returned to his native land with a light heart, happy in the possession of a lovely wife, and full of joyful anticipations of their wedded life amongst his former surroundings. His mother and sisters had not as yet agreed to cordially admit his wife into the family. Women have a way of wishing to look each other over before they do *that*; but Dunbar relied a good deal upon the native charm and tact of his wife in finally overcoming these prejudices; resolving, however, if they could not be overcome to set up a separate establishment of his own.

So, one fine morning, with the Moultons and some other American friends to see them off, the young couple took shipping for England, where they arrived in sound health and spirits, and in due time. His family were in London and it was the height of the season. Dunbar's carriage met the travelers at Euston Station and drove them to their home in Portland Place. The ladies of his family were spruced up to an alarming extent, as far as their habiliments went; evidently intending to impress the new wife with the hopelessness of any competition on her part in *this* line of endeavor. But Dunbar had looked out for this. Having had plenty of time in which to do it comfortably in New York, he had had his wife fitted up under the guidance of a modiste who had a Paris connection, so fully and so lavishly as to put his mother and sisters out of the running altogether. Their raiment looked English and dowdy enough in comparison with the Franco-American outfit of the young wife.

The English ladies, having had decidedly the worst of it in the first encounter, retired, however, in tolerably good order to make plans for the conduct of their future campaign; for, English-like, they were not to be easily beaten. Making due allowance for the strangeness of her new surroundings, Helena acted with charming tact; but naturally, having been pretty well apprised of the diffi-

culties she was likely to meet on the road to a final agreement with her new relatives, she gave such unmistakable evidences of what might be called "the American spirit," that the English contingent were fully warned that the least spark might lead to a disastrous explosion; although she, Helena, would never be the first to strike it.

And now, in honor of the young American wife, all sorts of festivities were set on foot; that is, as far as was consistent with Helena's proper respect for her mother's memory. Naturally enough, the glare of the London season to a woman accustomed to the dull surroundings of her former home was rather dazzling at first. It could hardly have been otherwise; and at times she was heartily sick of it all. But she loved her husband, and bravely set herself to the task of adapting her life to his. She went much farther in this direction than many women would have done; for Helena had a will of her own. She had resolved, however, that if trouble came it should never be laid at her door; and to this end she gave way to many an exaction on the part of her husband's mother and sisters.

Mrs. Dunbar was decidedly a difficult person to get on with. She had seen enough of both poverty and riches to induce her to leave the one and to cling to the other with all the fervor of an unromantic woman pretty well on in years. After a life of more or less self-denial, to find herself unexpectedly not only rich, but very rich, had the effect of making her extremely conservative; not to say selfish. "The idea of your bringing a penniless woman into the family, Padsey," she said to her son one day, when alone, "when with *our* fortune and position you could easily have married an heiress. I really think it was most inconsiderate of you. Both of your sisters will be marrying soon, in the natural course of events, and will have to be portioned off. How much better it would have

been for them, and for all of us if you had waited until you could have married a fortune!"

"But I *have* married a fortune," Dunbar replied. Helena is a woman far above rubies to me; besides, doesn't it appear to you rather small to underrate a woman who is willing to do so much for a principle as she and her poor mother were?"

"Oh bother your sentimentality, Padsey," returned the mother, sharply, "those women only did what it was their duty to do; and what would have been very dishonest in them *not* to do. So why make such a fuss about a simple matter of honesty. Most people are honest; or, at least I hope they are. They certainly ought to be; and with no expectation of reward, either."

"I doubt whether you could point out many women who would have acted as Helena and her mother did, and you must excuse me, mother, if I request you not to speak slightingly of what *I* consider the noble act of a pair of noble women; for I shall always resent it, when you do."

"There you go stirring up family quarrels again, Padsey. Perhaps you don't consider your mother and your sisters noble women? If you don't, don't hesitate to say so for a moment. We may as well know it now as at any other time."

"I certainly consider it ignoble conduct on your part to speak ill of my wife, mother; and I warn you distinctly that if it goes on you may make it necessary for me to set up an independent home; which, for many reasons, I should be sorry to do."

This implied threat had the desired effect for some time; but then it was forgotten, and disagreeable things began to be said and done again. The young ladies, Alice and Mary, were well intentioned girls; honest and affectionate enough, but devoted to their mother, and easily led by

her prejudices. Matters had of late almost reached a climax on several occasions, when the ending of the season and the family's going to the country served as a divertisement; and the peace had so far remained unbroken. The more free and unrestrained life of the country made matters go smoothly for a while longer; and Dunbar was doing his best to settle down into the belief that all would eventually turn out for the best in his family life, when an incident occurred which for a time so completely dominated all other affairs as to throw the bickerings of his women-folk into the shade. The incident was this: Calling at his Bankers one day, the manager said to him half playfully, "Dunbar, you ought to be more careful in accepting your bills; two or three times lately we have found your acceptances undated, and have had to send them back to the drawer, not wishing to trouble you in the matter; but, although we understand you are not a business man, for your own protection you should avoid such omissions, as some day it might easily lead to trouble."

Dunbar knew quite enough of London Bankers to recognize the pleasure they took in calling their clients to order. Still, although Brown's, the manager's, manner was only half serious, the subject matter was serious enough. Dunbar had accepted *no bills whatever*; and so was naturally enough perfectly innocent of any errors or omissions in the matter of their drawing. Ever since his experience with Dobson, however, he had been more or less prepared for pitfalls. Here was a very serious one, and it brought him up all standing. He did not lose his presence of mind, but asked quietly, "How many of my bills do you hold, Brown?"

"Oh, a lot. I could give you a list of them I suppose; but it would take some time to make it up. You see, you've been going it pretty well in accepting lately. I hope you are not going to make a business of it, Dunbar,

for, pleased as we are to have your name on almost any kind of paper in our Bank, there is a limit, you know; and, of course, you also know, such things get talked of amongst us Bankers, and it will do you no good in the end. You see, my boy, we really don't quite understand why you should need to raise money through bills at all; rich man as we know you to be, and then, I'm sorry to say, you don't seem to confine your business to your own Bank, as we would wish you to do; but several Banks have your acceptances."

This was going a little too far for good nature, and Dunbar was beginning to get not only alarmed but angry, "Stop there, Brown, if you please," he said sternly, "have I ever in my relations with your Bank asked you for a favor of any kind?"

"Um, well, now you ask the question, I really can't say you have, Dunbar; but, of course you understand we discount your bills entirely on the strength of your name. The drawers are no good, as you well know."

This remark rather put Dunbar in an unfortunate position. His object was, without at present exciting alarm, to ascertain the extent of the new trouble he saw he was called upon to face. To ask Brown who the drawers of the bills were would have been tantamount to accusing himself of a much greater breach of business decorum than his manager had so far accused him of. He resolved to pursue his investigations by another avenue of approach: "The bills have always been promptly met, haven't they?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, naturally; or we never should have allowed the amount to creep up to the figure it has."

Here Dunbar was baffled again. Who had paid these bills? *He* certainly had not; and yet to state this fact would be the spark which would send the whole situation sky-high. He paused a moment, thinking rapidly, and

catching at all the straws of hope in what was developing into an extremely serious situation. Dunbar had heard tales of London finance: How forged bills were a matter of almost daily occurrence, many of which were found out and privately settled, many of which were never found out. The guilty parties were the best payers in the world. Some London Bankers went as far as to say they preferred *forged* bills to any others; for the reason that they were the most promptly met. Still, here was a matter which must be promptly looked into. Sooner or later the man who was forging his name might get into difficulties so complicated as not to admit of his extracting himself from them, and *then*, now that he had been warned, he could be justly censured for not having spoken. Something whispered in his ear of his inner understanding one, and only one name, as the worker of this last wrong upon him. That name was Gow. To mention it now, however, to the manager of the Bank to whom Gow had introduced him, and where he himself kept his account, would be doing the young man an irretrievable injury, should his secret monitor happen to prove himself in the wrong. All things considered, it appeared best for him to content himself with the information he had been able to extract so far, without an apparent effort on his part, and to rely upon other sources of information for further light upon the situation. So, without much further comment, he took his departure.

Naturally enough in this dilemma, Dunbar's mind reverted to Catherine Marley. What had become of that strange woman? So many changes in his own life had taken place since he had last seen her, that he had had no time nor inclination to think of any possible changes in hers; that is, until now that he needed her services. She might have starved, or have made away with herself for all he knew. Such occurrences were common enough in Lon-

don. One unfortunate woman more or less makes very little difference where there are so many, so very many to recruit from. He now felt actually ashamed of himself for having given so little concern to the life and welfare of anyone, much more a helpless woman, who had gone so far out of her way to help him in *his* adversity. He now tried to recall her last address, but it had entirely faded from his memory. Then again, it occurred to him that his own attitude towards this woman had wholly changed since their last meeting. He was a married man now, and any little apparent indiscretions which might or might not have been overlooked by his mother and sisters, would certainly not be overlooked by his wife. It behooved him to avoid the slightest appearance of evil on Helena's account; if for no other reason.

His family were at present in the country, and he had come up to town partly upon business, and partly to get away for a period from the bickerings of his household, which by this time had become intolerable. Upon these visits to town, he slept at his own house in Portland Place, but dined wherever appetite or circumstance suggested. It occurred to him that by some very remote chance he might run against a stray item of information, or possibly meet either Gow or some of his friends at the eating house near Leicester Square, which had been the scene of his last adventure of a similar nature. As the interview with the Bank manager had taken place early in the afternoon, there would be considerable intervening time between that hour and the one at which he was likely to obtain any important results at the restaurant; and this time he spent at his club, leaving it in time to secure a seat in a favorable position to see and hear without being seen, before the arrival of any of the persons he hoped to fall in with. Upon this occasion, he had secured a seat in the booth adjacent to the one usually occupied by Gow

or his friends, from which he was enabled to watch the door of the eating house. He now ordered his dinner, and had almost finished it, although he had proceeded with the greatest deliberation, before anything in the remotest manner bearing upon the investigation he was interested in took place. Just as he was about to call the waiter to ask for his bill, a man hastily entered the place, advanced to nearly where he was sitting, and then furtively looking not into Dunbar's booth, but into a mirror directly opposite to it, was evidently disconcerted by what he saw; for he started, as if seeing some reflection in the glass, and then, without turning his face so that Dunbar could get a good look at it, proceeded to retrace his steps towards the door, through which he passed out into the street. Under different conditions there would have been nothing at all extraordinary in this; but Dunbar was looking for clues and unlikely occurrences, and the man's whole manner suggested something suspicious. Whoever he was, he was evidently anxious to remain unrecognized, and this very fact set our hero to thinking. He now as quickly as possible paid his bill, and rising from his seat sauntered towards the door, through which, as the season was summer and the door open, he could see what was going on in the street.

As he stood, partly concealed by the shadow of the doorway, this is what he saw: The man now evidently considering himself for the moment secure from observation, appeared to be waiting for the arrival of someone he was expecting, but whom he had failed to find inside the restaurant. Upon a closer examination of his features, it now occurred to Dunbar that there was something familiar about them, but as yet he could not fully identify them. Suddenly the man, yielding to a sudden impulse, removed a pair of spectacles from his eyes, as if they annoyed him, or he was unused to them, at the same time

uttering an impatient exclamation, as if disgusted at being kept waiting by his friend. In an instant Dunbar had recognized his former friend Gow, grown a little older than when he had last seen him, a good deal seedier, *and* protected by a slight disguise, very much like the one he himself had assumed on the occasion of his own last visit to the place.

Gow had undoubtedly seen Dunbar's reflection in the mirror, and, wishing to avoid him, had suddenly left his vicinity. What would be his next move? This question was answered by the sudden appearance of a young gentleman in a cab, which rapidly drove up to the door of the restaurant. It was lord Vennor. He was in the act of getting out of his cab when Gow ran up, whispered something hurriedly in his ear and himself jumped into the cab, at the same time calling out to the cabman the place to which he was to drive. The driver evidently failed to hear him, however, and asked him to repeat his instructions; which Gow did in a louder and very impatient tone of voice; "Calthorpe Street, Gray's Inn Road, you fool."

"Calthorpe Street," repeated the man, "right, sir."

Just as he said this, Dunbar saw one of the street women who frequent Leicester Square in such numbers draw near enough the cabman to easily overhear what he said, and then carelessly join a group of women with which she became so completely merged as to escape identification, except as the result of a careful inspection. Dunbar, having more than half expected to run against Catherine Marley before his evening adventure was over, had caught just a long enough glimpse of the woman to satisfy him that it was she. Not caring, however, to press his investigation in this quarter just now, he hastily called a cab standing nearby, and pointing to the one in which lord Vennor and Gow were driving, directed his driver to follow them as well as he could. In a moment he was

bowling along through the labyrinth of squalid streets, which at that time lay between that part of the town and Oxford Street, but which have in many instances been done away with by the cutting through of Shaftesbury Avenue. Upon reaching Gray's Inn Road from Oxford Street, the cab Dunbar was following ascended it, until Holborn Town Hall was passed on the right, and then it showed signs of stopping. Dunbar's driver was evidently up to his work, for he also slowed up in a manner to prevent a too noticeable diminution of the distance between the two vehicles. Suddenly, seeing the other cab stop, instead of stopping himself, he whipped up his horse and passed it, evidently desiring to avoid appearing interested in his neighbor's affairs.

Looking through the little back window of his cab, Dunbar now saw the two men get out of their cab, pay and dismiss the driver, and then arm in arm proceed up Gray's Inn Road until they reached a short narrow street on the right; down which they turned. Dunbar waited until they had gone far enough to make it prudent to do so, and then alighted from his cab, followed them until he saw them standing upon the porch of a small house on the lower side of the street. Then he saw Gow put his hand in his pocket for his slip key, unlock the door; and both pass inside. In another moment he saw the room on the first floor suddenly illumined; from which it was safe to infer that he had now successfully run his slippery friend to earth; and without arousing his suspicions. He then crossed the street from where he had been standing, carefully took the number of the house, together with a good enough look at it to absolutely secure a future recognition of it, in case of need; and then returning to his cab, entered it and requested the driver to take him home.

CHAPTER XIII.

"How the devil did you ever fetch up in this dog-kennel part of the town, Gow?" asked Vennor, taking a seat and lighting a cigar.

"Well, its rather a long story, but it all boils itself down into a very few words," answered Gow, rather surlily. "First, want of money, second, want of a shady retreat from which I can easily get away into a still more shady one in case of need. You see, Calthorpe Street is a sort of middle ground between the east and west ends of London. It's a sort of continuation of Guilford Street, which as you know runs from Russell Square to Gray's Inn Road. At its eastern end is the Cold-bath-fields Prison. My back windows look over the walls and into the prison yard. Not a very stimulating prospect, one would say; but it has its interest, for all that. I see every day some hundreds of poor fellows taking their exercise in their grey suits, many of whom are no more guilty of the offences of which they are charged than you and I are. It is an interesting sight to watch the poor devils, and to wonder what they are thinking about."

"Um," said Vennor, thoughtfully, "to *my* way of thinking, I could find many a more agreeable occupation than *that*; but then there's no accounting for tastes, is there?"

"On the other side of Cold-bath-fields," Gow went on, hardly heeding the interruption, "lies the great unknown

country of the east side of London. If I am driven out of my present habitation, I can easily shift my quarters to the other side; that is," he said under his breath, "unless I should happen to fall *within* the walls of the prison, in my flight over them."

"It seems to me you've changed your appearance a good deal since I saw you, Gow;" said Vennor, looking at him scrutinizingly, "what have you been doing, growing a moustache?"

"Yes," said Gow, laughing as he removed a false moustache from his face, "yes, I've grown a temporary moustache, which I wear upon certain occasions. Tonight, for instance, it saved my being recognized by a man I particularly don't care to meet just now; or I *think* it did."

"I suppose I know whom you mean, so you needn't mention any names. Well, what did you send for me for? What can I do for you?"

"Vennor, I'm afraid we've come to the end of our tether; that is, unless you can find some new discounting facilities. We've used up all the old ones, I'm satisfied of *that*."

"No more renewals?"

"No, I'm afraid not. You see, we've renewed a good deal already, and the Bankers are beginning to ask rather awkward questions as to why a man as rich as our acceptor is known to be should have any bills on the market at *all*, let alone renewing them."

"Yes, I see; and there's something in it, too."

"Now what we want is some new field altogether; and, I am sorry to say, unless we find it pretty soon, there will be trouble."

"Ah?" said Vennor, carelessly, "trouble for whom?"

"Trouble for both you and me, my lord," said Gow, savagely. "It's all very well, your allowing me to shoulder the whole responsibility of this affair; but I've stood it just

about as long as I intend to; and, if there's trouble, you'll take your share of it, my lord; and don't you think you won't."

"See here, Gow, if *that* is all you have to say to me, I shall take my hat and leave at once. At your request, I have drawn certain bills upon a certain party, whose name you said you could secure as acceptor. In some cases I have had these bills discounted at my Bankers, and I have strictly adhered to our agreement as to the division of the spoils. As the bills have matured they have either been promptly paid, or they have been renewed; and that's all I either know or intend to know about the matter."

At this, Vennor excitedly rose to his feet, took his hat and walking stick, and turned as if intending to leave the room. But Gow was too quick for him. Evidently suspecting the move, he anticipated it by suddenly rushing to the door, locking it and placing the key in his pocket; then he returned to his chair, motioning Vennor to resume the one *he* had left. "It's no good, my lord," Gow said, sullenly, "you are not to leave me in this mess alone, to work out of it the best I can. If we fall, we fall together. If we pull out, we pull out together. You have had your fair share of the spoils, and you'll stay in the game until it's finished."

Vennor was evidently cowed by the determined humor of his friend, and taking his seat, said in rather a conciliatory manner than otherwise: "Gow, for God's sake, don't make a scene about a little matter like this. I'll do anything in reason I can to help you, as you well know. But you also know perfectly well that I absolutely refused to have anything to do with your, ahem, scheme, when you first launched it. Now is this true or is it not?"

"In one sense it is, and in another it is *not*. Not wishing to get mixed up in a disagreeable matter, you pretended

to know nothing about it. That you did *know*, however, can be easily proved. For just one bit of evidence, and there are plenty of others, you knew as well as I did, because I took particular pains to tell you, that the man whose acceptance you were discounting had been for nearly a year some three thousand miles away from London, where these bills were accepted. A man can hardly be in New York and London at one and the same time for the purpose of bill discounting. In a word, you have been accessory in a neat little forgery; and you can struggle and wriggle as you will, and you can neither struggle nor wriggle out of it."

"For God's sake, Gow, don't use such language. We may be overheard."

"No fear of that, my lord; but, supposing we were, I don't much care. You see, I'm well nigh desperate. You don't know what I've been through in the last year. It's no small matter to keep a hundred thousand pounds worth of bills in the air under the most favorable conditions; but to keep them going when the slightest accident or delay of any kind meant two years penal servitude, is as near hell as I ever care to get."

"Yes, I can understand that; but it was your own plan, and not mine; for all *that*. I neither originated nor approved of it, as you well know."

"Yes," growled Gow; "but you did much more than either originate or approve of it; you *profited* by it. To say you were ignorant of it is absurd; and you *know* it is."

"Well, what's to be done? we shall never get out of this trouble by sitting here and abusing each other, shall we?"

"Listen, Vennor. Brown, the manager of my Bank, evidently suspects something. I know it from many little indications, or I *think* I know it, which comes to much

the same thing. At any rate, another renewal at his Bank would not only be impossible, but to ask for it, under the circumstances would be suicidal. Brown would immediately send for our friend who has lately returned from America, and then the whole matter would be blown upon in the twinkling of an eye. Those bills, some ten thousand pounds of them, come due in a few days, and they must be met at any cost; or you and I will be within the walls I can see from my back windows, or we shall have fled the country, within a week's time."

Vennor now appeared thoroughly frightened, and both the young men sat wrapped in very serious thought.

"Have you any reason to suspect that Dun— I mean our friend suspects the little liberty that has been taken with his name during his absence abroad?" asked Vennor.

"Dunbar was at the restaurant this evening for no good purpose, I can assure you. He is by no means an habitu   of the place. He was sent there to spy upon me and you; and I well know who sent him."

"Who?"

"It's not necessary to say just now; but whoever it was bodes no good for either of us. For all I know, the whole matter may be in the warrant department of Scotland Yard by this time. I have come to the absolute end of my rope, I tell you. Do you for a moment suppose I should be living in diggings like these at sixteen shillings a week, if I had money? I haven't a sovereign to my name, I tell you, except the few that I shall trouble you to give me now. So just turn out your pockets, please, and be quick about it, too."

"But, God, old man, this is highway robbery. You can't mean what you say."

"It may be *murder*, before I get through with you, Vennor; so do as I say, or, by God, I'll make you."

Vennor, at this pressing invitation took out his purse from his breast pocket, and opening it was about to very grudgingly extract the smallest possible sum from it required to satisfy the demands of his friend. Gow waited impatiently a moment, and then with a sudden movement snatched the wallet from Vennor's hands, saying as he did so, "I'll save you the trouble of counting these notes, my lord, by taking the lot. You can easily replace them, you know; while it is a matter of life and death to me."

Saying which Gow coolly put the wallet in his own pocket, as a hungry bull-dog would hide a bone he had just snatched from a weaker brother bull-dog. Vennor pocketed the loss and the insult with the air of a man who suddenly finds himself in the presence of a maniac, and wishes to humor him just long enough to effect his escape.

"And now, Vennor," said Gow, settling back in his chair, "you recognize the urgency of this affair, and I'd like to hear any suggestion you may have as to a way out of it."

"How would it answer to go to Dunbar, lay the whole matter before him, put yourself in his hands, so to speak, and beg for mercy. That is, beg him to either really accept some bills for you, or to lend you sufficient money to protect the ones already out? From what you have told me of him, he seems a good hearted sort of fellow; and then he would hardly like to be mixed up in such a scandal as the discovery of this little matter of yours would—"

"Ours, if you please."

"Well, then *ours*, would involve."

"I've thought of all that; but the devil is he has been through a previous experience somewhat similar to this in which he lost a large sum of money; and when he played the lenient part you suggest. I fear he would hardly do it again."

"Would it do any harm to try?"

"Why, yes. In order to ask him for the leniency I should have to disclose to him the fact of my having placed myself in a position to need it. That's as plain as the nose on your face."

"Yes, I see."

Then a long silence ensued, in which both men were evidently cogitating the best way out of their difficulties. Finally Gow, looked surreptitiously at his companion, as if endeavoring to fathom the turn his thoughts were taking, said; "If Dunbar could only be induced to return to America and to remain there another year or two, or better yet, never to return; it would be the best way out of this devilish affair."

Vennor, as upon a previous occasion, when his friend had begun to tread dangerous ground, gave no evidence of understanding. Gow waited a moment, and then pushed his line of circumvallation a little nearer. "You see, if Dunbar, by any unforeseen chance, should take sick and die, the bills would be duly paid out of his estate and no one would be the wiser."

"Yes," replied Vennor, still declining to perceive the drift of his friend's tactics, "yes, but then you know people never die when you want them to, and always die when you *don't* want them to."

"If he could disappear," went on Gow, "say, if he could be *made* to disappear into an insane asylum, or upon a very long voyage, it would answer almost as well as if he were to suddenly die. The trouble is, all this takes time; and we have no time to spare."

Vennor here gave a startled look, as if he had for the first time begun to see what Gow was driving at. The expression "suddenly die" had evidently opened up a new vista of crime for which he was wholly unprepared; logical as it seemed to appear to the man who was hatching one

diabolical plot to help him out of another. Careless and weak as Vennor was, he was not yet an assassin; nor, when it came to the supreme test, was he a coward. He had allowed himself to be robbed of his purse, simply because it would have cost him more in the way of resistance than the loss of the money would amount to; but here was a different condition of affairs altogether; and it aroused all the latent manhood in him. "Gow," he said, rising to his feet, "you are a damned villain; and you and I are done with each other for ever and ever. I admit my participation in your crimes up to date, and I will, as you say, bear my part of the responsibility in them. I mean what I say; and if Dunbar were standing before me now I should make a clean breast of the matter, as I have just advised you to do. I will go to him, explain matters, and urge upon him for his own sake and for ours to co-operate with us in settling this matter as speedily and as quietly as we can. That is, I will do this if you wish me to, rather than do it yourself. And now," he said, sternly, "having made this offer, and having accepted my share of the responsibility in this wretched affair, say what you have to say, and say it quickly; for as soon as you have said it, I propose to leave this room, and to leave *you*; for I shall have no further part or parcel with you in your hellish schemes. You are a bad man. So am I: but I am not as bad as you, and I pray God I never shall be. Now, say your say; for I am suffocating in breathing the same atmosphere you pollute with your breath."

"Your lordship mistakes my position altogether. I had no intention of doing anything further than state a supposititious case. Indeed, you do me a great wrong, my lord," said Gow, in a whining, frightened voice.

"Is that all you have to say?"

"Yes, my lord, except—"

"Except what?"

"Except that, of course you won't say anything to anyone about this matter; that is, until I ask you to."

"Yes, I agree to that. I certainly am not anxious to appear in a case of this kind, and only take the stand I have in answer to your charge that I was shirking my share of the risk. And now, sir, instantly open that door, and let me pass unmolested; or, by God, you'll commit murder now and here. Unlock that door, I say."

At this, Vennor threw off his coat, and made other unmistakable signs of an immediate opening of hostilities, which Gow instantly recognized by getting up and doing as Vennor had commanded him to do. He unlocked the door with the air of a man who had met with an unexpected but temporary defeat. Vennor coolly put on his coat, picked up his belongings, and before leaving the room, turning and looking Gow squarely in the face, said coldly: "You understand, sir, that all relations between us are absolutely at an end. I don't wish you to recognize me on the street, nor shall I recognize you. If, in connection with our previous affairs you ever wish to communicate with me, you have the address of my solicitors and your message can come through them. I shall not leave town, nor in any manner seek to escape the full consequences of our misdoing; but, make no mistake about it, you and I will each make his own fight as he sees fit; and *not* together."

Saying which he walked slowly and coolly out of the room, leaving Gow sorely discomfited.

"Ah," said Gow, to himself, as he heard the street door slam, "there goes my last chance. I'm afraid I did not play my hand for all it was worth tonight by any means; but there was a look in that man's face I didn't like at the finish. He would certainly have killed me, or I should have killed him, if we had had a fight. Perhaps it's as well as it is; but what's to be done now? I'm in no position to defend myself against such an array of troubles as I

shall have on my hands in a few days now. The forgery will certainly be discovered by Brown as soon as the bills come back unpaid. He will immediately notify Dunbar and then all the fat will be in the fire! As to getting rid of Dunbar, it would be a ticklish job at best; and, situated as I am now with no money and with no one to help me, it would be much more dangerous to tackle it than to allow matters to take their course. Let's see how much money I have?"

Here he opened Vennor's wallet and counted out some bank notes and some gold, which amounted in the aggregate to between forty and fifty pounds. "There," he grumbled, "not much of a capital to start a new business upon; but it might be worse."

He now calmly went to a closet and taking out a small hand bag packed a few toilette requisites in it. Then he changed his clothing for a rough suit, a slouch hat, and put on his false moustache. Then he looked at his watch. It was about ten o'clock. "Now, to get down stairs and out on the street without my landlady pouncing upon me for her devilish arrears of rent."

Taking a stout stick in his hand, pulling his coat collar up over his ears, and concealing his bag under his coat, Gow now quietly descended the stairs, opened the front door, and silently closed it as he passed into the street. Once upon the sidewalk, he turned to the right and walked in the direction of Cold-bath-fields Prison at a lively pace. He had only proceeded a few yards in the direction he had chosen, when a woman's figure glided noiselessly from behind the shadow of the porch of a neighboring house, and followed him. Gow now had reached the end of Calthorpe Street, and turned to the right again into the squalid street which borders the prison on its western side. This led him through an Italian quarter of the town, the part of London where the organ-grinders and

Italian peddlers live; a dangerous place to pass through at night. Soon, however, he crossed Farringdon Road, and continued on into the real east end of London, where he was speedily lost; as he wished and intended to be.

The next day, Dunbar received a telegram signed C. Marley, requesting him to meet her at the restaurant in Leicester Square at eight o'clock that evening. Having partly expected it, he had already made up his mind to keep the rendezvous. Accordingly, as the hour of the meeting arrived, Dunbar found himself sitting face to face with the mysterious woman in one of the alcoves of the Italian eating house aforesaid. The woman had changed little since he had last seen her; but there was a look of weariness and hope long deferred in her eyes which could not fail to excite Dunbar's profoundest sympathy. In reply to a few kindly words, however, asking after her welfare, she gave a very short answer, although by no means a discourteous one, in which she evidently wished to convey the impression that she was not there to speak of her own affairs, but rather of his. "There is something going to happen," she began, as soon as the dinner had been ordered, and the waiter dismissed, "and I considered it best to warn you of it. I saw you last evening, and saw you follow a friend of yours. Perhaps you already know or suspect more than I can tell you. If so, I shall have my trouble for my pains, I suppose; but I could not rest until I had seen you."

"And I was going to look you up, although I confess I had lost your address," answered Dunbar. "You were quite right in wishing to warn me, and I thank you for it."

The woman was evidently pleased that Dunbar appreciated her intention; but said nothing. She was waiting for him to go on. There was a struggle going on in his mind as to whether or no to entrust this woman with the full import of his suspicions; but he finally resolved to do

so, and said: "I fully agree with you in thinking something is going to happen. My only fear is that it has *already* happened, and that we are too late to prevent it."

The woman gave him an inquiring look, but asked no question.

"Should you think it possible for the friend you just mentioned to commit a serious crime, Mrs. Marley?" Dunbar asked.

She gave him a frightened look, and then peered about the room to see if she was likely to be overheard, and said in a low voice, "That man, under pressure, would commit *any* crime however great. There is absolutely *no* crime he would not commit. I have lost sight of him for some months lately. He has changed his quarters, and has evidently been keeping out of the way. Last night I saw *you*, before I saw him, and seeing you suggested my looking for him. I followed him to his lodgings in Calthorpe Street, where he had a long interview with his friend, lord Vennor. Shortly after the latter had left the house, our friend left it too, and is now hiding in one of the worst streets in the east end. I followed him until after midnight, and saw him settled in his new quarters before I left him."

"And you did this without his seeing you?"

"Oh, yes, there was no difficulty in *that* to one who knows London, as, unfortunately, I know it."

"And you could find him again, you think?"

"I think so, yes. Of course, he may move; but, from the way he acted I think he feels safe in his present hiding place, and does not intend, for the present at least, to leave London."

"Would you consent to assist in finding him if it were necessary?"

"That depends. I should not give him up to the police, if that is what you mean."

"That is exactly what I mean. I believe the man has forged my name at my Bankers for a large amount."

"I have not the slightest doubt of it," answered the woman, calmly, "that's rather in his line. He's always dabbling in bills."

"Well, isn't *that* a rather serious matter from your point of view?"

"Oh, yes; but men do a good many serious and cruel things when they are desperate."

"And you wouldn't assist in bringing him to justice for such a crime?"

"No, I would not. I do not belong to the police force. Neither am I a judge. It is nothing to me, except as far as *you* are concerned. I should like to help you if I could; but I would only endeavor to protect even you from a possible danger. I certainly would not assist you in carrying out a revenge."

"And I honor you, my friend, for taking the stand you do; for it is the one I myself take; but, for all that, something must be done. Otherwise, I myself may be taken for an accomplice of this man."

He then went on and explained the position of affairs to her, and told her of his interview with his Bank manager. She listened quietly until he had come to the end of what he had to say, and then she asked: "How large an amount do these bills represent, and how much longer could this matter be kept quiet?"

"I can answer neither of those questions," said Dunbar, "for the reason that I myself could not ask them of my Bank manager for fear of betraying an ignorance of my own affairs, which would have had the effect of bringing the affair to a very sudden climax."

The interview was now brought to a close, and Dunbar parted with his strange friend at the door of the restaurant. As he wended his way towards his home it occurred to him that Catherine Marley's unwillingness to assist in the

possible apprehension of Gow was due to some personal interest she took in the man, rather than to any adhesion to the principle she advocated. But this was a matter of conjecture only. Beyond the discovery of the fact that she was in possession of the secret of Gow's hiding place, the interview had been unproductive of results; and Dunbar rather questioned in his own mind whether *this* secret had not been purchased at the price of confidences on his part which might better have been withheld. However, it was too late to withdraw them now; so he decided to quietly await results for a few days before taking any farther action in the matter.

In the course of a week or two he received a formal notice of protest upon a bill of two thousand pounds which was lying unpaid at his own Bankers. The notice was accompanied by a rather curt and censorious note from the manager expressing surprise at the occurrence and requesting Dunbar's immediate attention to the matter. Dunbar's answer was rather a careless letter asking Brown whether his credit was not good for a small matter of two thousand pounds, requesting him to pay the bill out of his current balance, and to send it to him. This was done; and now Dunbar had in his possession the absolute evidence that *some one* had forged his name. As this particular bill was drawn by Gow, it was safe enough to assume that that gentleman was the forger; although, of course, it was not legal evidence.

In a few days more came another notice of protest; *this* time accompanied by a request that he should call at the Bank at his earliest convenience. As he at the time had a sufficiently large balance to cover a good many more possible demands upon it of this nature, he repeated his former request to pay the bill out of his balance, and to send it to him. He would call, he said, when next in town. In fact, Dunbar, having made up his mind that

he, for the present at least, should pay these forged bills as they came due, partly from an abhorrence of resorting to a criminal remedy against a former friend, and partly because he dreaded a scandal of such a nature on his own account, resolved to refrain from doing anything to excite the suspicions of his Bankers. He argued that as long as the bills were paid no one could be injured but himself. His Bankers certainly could have no cause of complaint, except the temporary loss of confidence in an old client which such an occurrence as allowing a bill to go to protest would naturally engender; and this, again, was his loss rather than theirs. So he allowed the matter to go on until some ten thousand pounds worth of these irregular bills were in his hands, and then he considered it time to act. Before calling upon his Bankers, however, he concluded to ascertain whether or no Catherine Marley had any tidings of his former friend Gow to communicate. He wrote to the address she had given him and almost by return post had a reply stating that the gentleman in question had not changed his address and showed no immediate indication of intending to do so. As the postscript of a lady's letter, not even excepting a woman of the phlegmatic type Mrs. Marley had so far shown herself to be, generally contains the entire kernel of what she desires to say, *this* letter ended with a postscript in which the writer begged Dunbar to take no steps whatever in the direction of exposing this latest imposition upon him until she had the opportunity of seeing him. "I know this is asking a good deal of a man in your position," she went on, "but, having taken the magnanimous stand you have, continue to take it a little longer, as a favor to *me* which I may or may not ever be able to repay; in which case you will be compelled, I fear, to charge additional loss entailed by my request to the unreasonableness of my sex. *Voilà tout.*"

CHAPTER XIV.

A careful search at the bottom of Dunbar's heart would have revealed another motive, in addition to those already mentioned, for his disinclination to bring matters to a crisis in his present dilemma; and that was a very strong suspicion that by doing so he should disoblige Catherine Marley. Her letter having particularly confirmed this theory, he was resolved to lose no time in coming to a full knowledge of her position in the matter at the approaching interview. They met, as before, at the Leicester Square restaurant.

"You will think me a very strange woman, Mr. Dunbar," she began, as soon as opportunity offered, "but the fact is I can't help it. I *am* strange. That is, I am strange even to myself. That man is a villain, and deserves much more punishment for his crimes than he will ever receive for them; but, for all that, I beg you not to be the means of starting a prosecution against him. I know it is asking a great deal of a man to forego his just revenge upon a scoundrel who has treated him as badly as our friend has treated you; but, for my sake, if I have any possible right to ask such a favor, do not set the machinery of the law in motion against this man!"

There was an earnestness in the woman's voice which vibrated through every word she uttered as she made this request; while the tears starting to her eyes proclaimed

the intensity of the inward struggle it had caused her to make it. She was a rather cold and very proud person by nature, and Dunbar had the delicacy to perceive and to appreciate the extent of the humiliation she was undergoing in pleading the cause of a worthless man. "What is the claim he has upon her?" he asked himself.

She went on: "If it were a case in which to keep silent was to invite further bad treatment, it would be another thing; but, situated as he is, he cannot do you any further injury if he would. I saw him only a day or two ago. He is much broken. He is living like a dog. He is being punished for what he has done. He *thinks* he is being hunted, and that is as bad as if he really were. Bad as his present condition is, it can only grow worse as his money gives out. He has no resources within himself to make his living, and starvation stares him in the face. He is a very bad man, but I pity him."

"And you have no other motive than pity?"

"That is *my* affair," she said, somewhat brusquely.

"Pardon me, it *is* your affair, undoubtedly; but somehow it would be easier for me to make up my mind what to do if I understood your motive for asking for leniency for this man. For myself, I think he deserves to incur the full penalty of the law. That is, of course, assuming that he is guilty of the crimes of which we suspect him; of which there can be very little doubt."

"None at all, I am ready to admit."

"But don't you think it is a menace to society to allow such a man to be at large?"

"Not at all. Unless you imprison him for life, which you could hardly do for the crime we suppose him to have committed, you will make him a far more dangerous enemy to society by sending him to prison for a time, and then liberating him. By doing *that* you will convert an accidental criminal into an habitual one. You will furnish the man

with a grievance; you will make him vindictive against society, whereas, up to now, like a good many other men you meet in the ordinary walks of life, he thinks the world owes him a living, and he is simply taking it where he can find it."

"Then you would abolish prisons altogether?"

"No, not necessarily. There are, undoubtedly, and always will be many people in the world whom it would be better for the world to keep in prison. Most of them, however, in my opinion, have been made dangerous by former imprisonment. When we get away from the idea of glutting either the public or the individual desire for revenge, we shall have made a long stride in the direction of reforming the masses. As it is, we never send a man or a woman to prison without not only making a worse man or woman, but without setting them to corrupting others; both in and out of prison."

"I am inclined to think you are right in a very large degree. And so you wish me not to proceed against the man on general principles, rather than on personal grounds?"

"Pity is a personal motive, I suppose; and I pity him."

"Well, then, in a word, what do you wish me to do?"

"I wish you, I beg of you to shield this man from the consequence of his crimes; to pocket the loss it will entail upon you for the present, and to wait for the processes of time to work out a final settlement of the account. It may take years to do it, but it will come round in time. I am not a good Christian, but the older I grow, the less desire I have for revenge; and the more I believe in the operation of a law of compensation in human affairs which works out sublime results in its own good time and way."

"Well, I yield to your logic, Mrs. Marley," said Dunbar. "I promise you to take no active part in bringing

that man to justice. I will wait, as you suggest, for the grand results of time. Will that satisfy you?"

"Yes, it will; and it shall be my one object in life to see that you shall not lose by making this promise."

This brought the interview to an end. The next morning Dunbar called upon his Bankers. He found the manager, Mr. Brown, in a very different humor from any he had ever observed before. London Bankers are easily upset by anything irregular in the conduct of their clients. There had been a good deal that was irregular in Dunbar's conduct of late; and, possibly for the very reason that the Bank had not lost a penny by it, the manager felt himself in a position to read a lecture to his erring depositor.

"Mr. Dunbar," he began, "of course you understand we can't allow this sort of thing to go on in our Bank without a full explanation on your part. We shall expect of you now a statement as to your affairs; and, um, a promise to discontinue any more bill discounting. We cannot understand why you ever should have resorted to it, in the first instance."

"Have you any more bills of mine, Mr. Brown?"

"No, we have not. You have paid them all."

"And I still have a respectable balance remaining in your hands?"

"Oh, yes, of course; but that does not excuse—"

"I am not asking to be excused, Brown. If you don't like the manner in which I conduct my affairs, just draw me a cheque for my balance, and I will go elsewhere."

"Oh, no, Mr. Dunbar, we don't mean *that*. Only, of course, you can readily understand—"

"I can readily understand nothing; Brown, except that I decline to be lectured by you without due cause; and, if I have any more of it, I shall leave your Bank and try and find one where I shall be treated differently. I wish

you a very good morning, sir." And at that he walked out of the Bank parlor, leaving the manager a good deal confused and not a little repentant. Dunbar had been gone but a few moments when Brown went to the door of an inner room, which had remained partly open during the interview, and motioned to a man who had been sitting there to come to him. Responding to the gesture, our old friend, Inspector Evans entered.

"Well, Evans, did you hear all that was said?"

"I did, sir, but I don't see as you got much information. Certainly not enough to make a complaint upon. I thought you intended to ask some questions in order to find out something in regard to this affair, sir?"

"I fully intended to, but Dunbar is so infernally independent he gave me no opportunity. You see, his is a very valuable account, and the Bank would not like to lose it."

"Yes, I see, sir; but it rather makes a fool of me to send for me to look into an important affair like a suspected forgery of a large number of bills, and then to let the only witness we could make much out of slip through our fingers as you did Mr. Dunbar. Its a little hard, sir.

"I can't help it, Mr. Evans. As the matter stands now, in any case, we have no grounds to proceed upon, as the bills have been duly paid; and are now in the hands of the payee. I had hoped, of course, to get Dunbar to place the matter in your hands; but I certainly cannot *compel* him to, as you can well understand."

"Yes, sir, you can lead an 'orse to the water, but you can't make 'im drink. It would have been a feather in my cap to 'ave pulled this matter off, as we 'ave been suspicious of this man Gow for some time. However, 'is time will come some of these days. That kind of man seldom keeps out of trouble long."

"Has Scotland Yard any idea where he is?"

"Oh, yes, sir; he's in Paris right enough, or somewhere

on the continent. Of course we can't do much without a warrant; but we'd soon run 'im to earth with one."

"Well, keep your eye on him; for I have reason to believe there are still a rather large amount of bills to be paid. Dunbar may get tired of losing money some of these days, and conclude to take proceedings against this man Gow."

"Right, sir, we will." And here Evans took his leave.

After this, Dunbar was called upon to pay a number of other bills which had been discounted in other Banks; the aggregate of which, with the sum already paid made him a loser of about twenty-five or thirty thousand pounds. There the matter was allowed to rest. True to his promise to Catherine Marley, he never took any steps to punish the offender; but pocketed his loss, and said nothing about it. Gow, wherever he was, remained there; and was lost to his old friends, while his old haunts knew him no more.

The next event of importance with Dunbar was the birth of a son and heir. This happy incident did much to heal the dissensions among the women of his family, for the present at least; and he found himself settling down into the dignified life of a country gentleman in one of the loveliest counties of England, with a charming wife, an interesting family, a town house, an immense income, and, to all appearances, as secured a future as any man could wish or hope for. *But*, and there is always a "but," or an "if" in mundane affairs, in a far distant country in the West, a small cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, was rising, which, in the interests of the reader of this story, it will become our duty to investigate, even at the cost of making a trip to America again, and to Virginia City; where we last left our friend Dobson. This gentleman had been getting on about as well as a "tenderfoot," and an Englishman at that, could expect to do. He had succeeded in losing the greater part of his money, that is, of

the money he was known to have. As has already been stated, he kept a reserve fund always about his person in case of extreme need. He had made many acquaintances, some of whom were desirable ones, others distinctly undesirable; and still others who were undesirable, only he had yet to find it out. In a rough place like a Western mining town at the time we speak of, there were many men to be found, who, like Dobson himself, had pasts which perhaps would hardly bear looking into. Dobson did his best to get on with these men, and to get upon terms upon which he could some day hope to do as *they* appeared to be able to do, that is, to adapt himself to his new surroundings and begin to make money. But Dobson was getting on in years, and had never had the faculty of getting on very well with anyone. Then he was an Englishman, and in the great and glorious West there are plenty of Americans to be found who fail to recognize the fact that the Revolutionary war was ended long ago. Their anti-British prejudices remain as strong as ever, and an Englishman is considered fair game for anything, from a practical joke to a highway robbery. As our friend Dobson also had prejudices which he took very little apparent trouble to conceal, he unconsciously aggravated this condition of affairs; and succeeded wonderfully in making enemies instead of friends.

Finding, after the loss of all the money he had put into his first venture, that he was not cut out for a miner, he had now opened a law office, where he began to look into the mining laws of the country, and finally to build up a little business amongst the prospectors who came to him for counsel in matters relating to their mining claims. He was sitting in his office one day, when the door opened, and a young man of perhaps twenty-five years of age, well set, handsome, and evidently of Irish descent, judging from his slight brogue, entered the room.

"What can I do for you, sir?" asked Dobson.

"Well, sir, I'm not at all sure you can do anything; but I heard you were from London, and I thought perhaps you could tell me something of a relative I have over there, a sister."

"Um, London is a pretty large place."

"Is it, sir? Would it be as large as Frisco, sir?"

Dobson gave the young man a look of silent contempt, as he answered, "London has a population of rising five millions. I don't know how many San Francisco has; a good deal less than half a million, I suppose."

"Whew, sir, but that's an awful number; five millions. Its hardly likely you've ever even seen my sister, let alone being acquainted with her."

"Hardly; but what is her name? Curious things sometimes happen. I may have met her without knowing it."

"Dillon, sir, Kate Dillon."

"No, I can't recall ever having met such a person. Has she been there long?"

"Some fifteen years, sir."

"And doesn't she write you?"

"She *did*, sir; but she's fallen off of late. I haven't heard from her for a matter of five or six years. I'm afraid she's dead or married; or something has gone wrong with her. She was as regular as a clock in writing for a long time after leaving home."

"I should have thought you would have gone to London to look her up," said Dobson, carelessly, and taking up a letter, as if to intimate that he would like to bring the interview to a close.

"Sure, I never thought of *that*," said the young man, partly to himself; and then perceiving the lack of interest the older man took in his affairs, now that it had become apparent that there was probably no money in them for him, he was about to take his leave, when a thought

seemed to strike him, for he stopped just short of the door, and turning so as to face Dobson, said, awkwardly: "You are a lawyer, sir, and naturally don't care to do business for nothing. Now, I've some money, sir, and I'm willing to spend it in trying to find my sister. As you know London and I don't, perhaps you would as soon take up this business for me as any other?"

"Well," said Dobson, pricking up his ears at the word "money," "I'm not an inquiry office, you know; but, possibly I might be able to assist you in some way. At any rate, it would do no harm for you to tell me your story. After that, if I can do you no good, I can tell you so, and there will be no great harm done."

"Thank you, sir, that's just what I'd like," said the young man, returning to the chair he had just left, and sitting down in response to a motion from Dobson. "Of course, sir, you understand this is a matter of business, and I expect to be charged for this consultation at the usual rates."

Dobson nodded his head affirmatively, and settling back in his chair, half closing his eyes, crossing his legs, resting his elbows on the arms of his chair, and clasping his hands, prepared to listen to his new client's story. The latter, evidently satisfied now that he was paying for the time and attention bestowed upon him, also assumed a position suggestive of having rather a long one to tell, began as follows:

"I was born in a mining camp in this country, sir, some twenty-five years ago. Both my mother and my father died when I was very young; so young indeed that I have only the faintest recollection of them. After the death of my parents, it became a question amongst the miners of our camp what was to be done with me and my sister, who was a baby like myself, but a year or two older. At that time there happened to be an Irishman in our camp

who had lately drifted in upon us from the East. He was evidently a gentleman, but one who had seen better days. Of course, sir, I am not speaking from my own recollection now, for I was but an infant. I learned of these particulars afterwards. This gentleman had given his name as Sheehan; but, as in a rough mining country like ours, men of all kinds came together, many of whom, for reasons of their own, don't wish to be known by their true names, it is customary to never make inquiries, but to take any man's name just as he gives it. I speak of this, sir, in order to explain what happened afterwards. This Mr. Sheehan took pity upon us helpless orphans, and said he would take care of us as best he could; and, as this was apparently the best arrangement that could be made for us, my sister and I were turned over to him. I have an indistinct recollection of my childhood now, growing of course more vivid as time went on. Our protector was evidently by no means well off in the world when he first took charge of my sister and myself, and we lived poorly. As time went on, however, matters appeared to improve with him. He made money and prospered; or I assume he did, for our style of living changed decidedly for the better. Mr. Sheehan was a quiet man, moody, perhaps; but he was always kind to us, and we became in time very fond of him. For one thing I have to be grateful to him, he took the greatest pains with our educations, my sister's and mine. Nothing was too good for us in this line. We were sent to the best schools he could find, and he spared no expense. As we grew older, he sought to shield us from contact with the rougher element of society one finds in a mining community, and was continually reminding us that good manners were the best passport to success one could have in the world. We were in due time sent to boarding schools near San Francisco, and I was afterwards sent to college. Mr. Sheehan, not being mar-

ried, found a difficulty in looking after my sister, which naturally increased rather than the reverse as she grew older. He was a very conscientious man, and earnestly wished to do the very best he could for us, but he often told both my sister and myself that as she must some day grow to womanhood, and as his prospects and movements were very uncertain, he should avail of the first opportunity that offered to place my sister in life with the most suitable persons he could find for the purpose. Such an opportunity offered at last: An English gentleman and his wife visiting the country in some way came in contact with Mr. Sheehan, and a mutual friendship sprang up between them. This lady and gentleman took an especial liking to my sister, who had by this time grown to be a pretty girl, and offered to take her into their family; not exactly to adopt her, but to finish her education in England and to fit her to take care of herself as a governess. As this seemed to be a very desirable arrangement, it was carried out, and my sister and I parted; she going to England, and I remaining in San Francisco to finish my college course. After my graduation my protector took me into business with him, first as a clerk, and finally as a partner. Both of us being much alone in the world, a strong attachment grew up between us, and we became inseparable. He loved me as a son, and I him as a father. Business prospered with us. We were mining prospectors or promoters; and in a new country like this there were many opportunities for making money in dealing in mining claims. We made money, and we occasionally lost it; but, in the main, we were successful."

Here Dobson shifted his position a little, and allowed a somewhat bored look to supplant the judicial one with which he had so far listened to the young man's story. The latter noticed this, and said, "I have nearly reached the end of what I have to say, sir. I thought it best to

begin at the beginning in order that you could understand the end; that's all."

"Go on," said Dobson.

"Well, sir, as time wore on, I noticed that my protector grew more silent and more morose than ever. He was always kind to me, you understand, it wasn't *that*; but I remember one day a batch of letters reached him with a foreign postage stamp on them. They looked as if they had been waiting for him for a long time somewhere, and when he finished reading them he looked angry and worried. Then some correspondence followed between him and his people in England, for I knew of his both sending and receiving letters. Finally, a letter came which seemed to particularly exasperate him. I watched him while he was reading it, and heard him mutter under his breath: "Not a cent of my money shall he have, nor his heirs; so help me God."

"The next day he sent for his lawyer, with whom he remained closeted for several hours. After this, he began to fail perceptibly, and anyone could see that he was not long for this world. He soon took to his bed, which he never again left until we placed him in his coffin. As his end drew near, he sent for me, and requesting me to sit by the side of his bed, said he wished to talk with me while he was in the full possession of his senses. He then somewhat briefly told me the story of his life, both before and after his arrival in this country, with which I shall not trouble you any further than as to where it bears upon my own. In a few words, he had had some family misunderstandings at home which had made it desirable for him to leave for foreign parts. He had borrowed some money from his brother, it seems, which had caused friction; and, upon his arrival in New York, he had been induced to put money into some enterprises which had turned out unfortunately. Finally, he had become so involved as to

render it necessary for him to again resort to a loan from his brother, which naturally enough, served to inflame rather than to allay the feud between them. In making his demand for this loan, he had pleaded his own personal safety, as he had in some way rendered himself liable to arrest as the result of his business misadventure in New York. He only asked for money enough to clear his name from reproach, and to enable him to get away from the scene of his financial disaster, and offered as a rather contingent security, a will in his brother's favor; which was duly enclosed in his letter. The money came, but with it a letter of disapproval of his late course which so irritated him that he swore never again to communicate with his brother except for the purpose of liquidating his debt. This oath he literally adhered to. In leaving New York, which he did immediately upon receiving the money to pay his indebtedness, he took particular pains to conceal his future plans, and to cover up all traces by which he could be followed, or even written to. He started for the West, and eventually, after many adventures, drifted into our mining camp, as I have already related. In the course of time, as he made money, he scrupulously paid back every cent, not only of the loan made him in New York, but of all the preceding ones. More than that, he added to the total sum an amount which more than represented a fair rate of interest for all the moneys he had ever received from his family; and this, without in any way invalidating the will he had made in his brother's favor, whom he still looked upon as his heir. One would have supposed that such treatment upon his part would have served to heal all the dissensions which had embittered his family life; but this did not seem to be the case. For some reason, I know not what, but I believe owing to the attitude assumed by his brother's *wife*, rather than his brother, the olive branch he had offered his people in

England was not kindly received; and it embittered him beyond anything in his life which had so far taken place. As a result, he resolved to make a new will, and to entirely cut off the inheritance which might have gone to his brother or his brother's heirs."

"This new will was made in *my* favor. Upon his death-bed, as it proved to be, he adopted me as his son. His will had been already formally drawn and witnessed. It bequeathed to me absolutely all property wheresoever situated, together with his business, his interests in various mines, his property in San Francisco; in a word, he gave me all he had to give, and with only one condition; which was really less a condition than a reminder; and that was, that I should always protect and support my sister."

"This is all, sir; and now you understand my anxiety to *find* my sister. I have two motives, first, my love for her; second, the desire to faithfully carry out the wishes of one of the kindest of protectors a man ever had. Now, sir, as I am very well to do in the world, money is no object as compared with results. I reproach myself for not having moved in the matter long ago; but, from a remark in the last letter I received from my sister, I inferred that for some reason she preferred to discontinue the correspondence for awhile. As at the time of her writing it she was engaged as a governess in a highly respectable family, I attributed her attitude to some possible misunderstanding with her employers, or to a meditated change of situation. At any rate, I allowed both the time, and as it turned out, the opportunity to recommence our correspondence to slip by; for when I again wrote her, the letter was returned through the dead letter office, marked "address unknown." Since then I have made inquiries as best I could, but, so far, to no purpose whatever; I regret to say. For some years I have given over trying to find her, hoping against hope that some day I should receive a letter from her ex-

plaining her long silence. As matters stand now, I am determined to spend my last dollar in finding her, if alive. So, sir, I am prepared to take your advice, whatever it is. If you say the word, I am ready to set out immediately for London, although from what you say, I fear I should not, unaided, accomplish much there, it is such a vast place from what you say of it; and I am only a simple, country-bred boy."

Here the young man paused, as if resting his case; at the same time giving an anxious look into his companion's face to see whether or no he could look for kindness or assistance in that quarter. Dobson, although a hard man, could not help marking the utter insouciance and helplessness of his new client, and it appealed to him. "I will do the best I can," he answered, with some appearance of feeling, "but you must understand that, after the lapse of time you speak of, it will probably be a long, a difficult, and an expensive search. When people disappear in London, either of their own volition or otherwise, its a good deal like looking for a needle in a stack of hay to find them; but, still, we may accomplish something, after all. So many strange things happen in this world. By the way, what is your full name?"

"Patrick Dillon."

Dobson took it down. "Yes, and I have your sister's name, Kate Dillon, or Catherine, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"And now the name of the family in which you say your sister acted as governess?"

"Gow."

Dobson, started, as if a small bomb had suddenly exploded under his chair; but he preserved presence enough of mind to ask: "And now, last of all, what was the real name of Mr. Sheehan, your protector?"

"Patrick Dunbar."

CHAPTER XV.

There are certain unexpected events in life which suggest the idea that sometimes Fate in a frolic mood, out of a million possible combinations, selects the very last, the millionth, for the express purpose of astonishing the sons of men. Some such thought was in Dobson's mind, at any rate, as he sat looking in amazement at the young man before him. He had listened to the long story his new client had had to tell with just about as much sympathy as could be expected from a tired, world-worn man whose interest in life had long since ceased to concern itself with any but his own affairs. He was in a sad plight himself, and he *pitied* himself more than anyone else in the world. To be sure, there had been a certain interest attaching to the story, as young Dillon had told it. It would have been interesting if he had seen it in print in a magazine as a "short story." Up to the last half dozen words of it, it had possessed very little more than a *literary* interest to him, however. A heart long since closed to pity is not easily reopened by a tale of woe. It must appeal to some other emotion than pity; to some other organ than the heart. But all this had changed now. Fate had evidently selected him as the beneficiary of the new shuffle she had made of the cards. He was to be the one to benefit by the millionth chance!

And what a chance it was. There sat a young man before him, who absolutely unconsciously to himself held

the destinies of several persons in his hand; his own included. And now the question arose in Dobson's mind how to play the cards Fate had so miraculously dealt him. A false play might easily not only spoil the game, but make it a most unfortunate circumstance his having been one of the players in it. To reveal to Dillon his strength, might result unfortunately; as it is supposed to do in dealing with the *horse*. You must know your horse. To inform Dillon that he, Dobson, had left London because he had robbed the supposed heir of the late Patrick Dunbar, could hardly be expected to prove a pleasant piece of news to the *real* heir who would ultimately be called upon to stand the loss. On the contrary, it would be eminently calculated to lead to unpleasant results. *Not* to inform him, would of course be to throw away the opportunity of his life to recoup himself for all his losses, to render it possible for him to return to London, and to turn the tables upon certain of his friends in that city, who, if they had not rejoiced to see him leave, could hardly be expected to rejoice to see him return.

All of these thoughts passed through his mind in review, until it suddenly occurred to him that his pre-occupation would soon begin to make itself evident to the young man whom of all others in the world, as matters had turned out, it was the most important for him to study and conciliate. So, with an almost apparent effort, he concentrated his mind upon the salient point in the whole situation; namely, the will: "You spoke of Mr. Dunbar's will," he said, with an assumed carelessness. "I suppose you have every reason to suppose it is in order?"

"Oh, yes. The will was most carefully drawn. Mr. Dunbar looked out for *that*. Both upon my account, and because, having once made up his mind to disinherit his brother and his heirs, he left no stone unturned to carry

out his intention. He even took the precaution, he told me before he died, having secured the best lawyer he could find to draw it, to engage the *next* best to revise it in order to detect any possible indications of weakness. There were none to be found. It was perfect, and has long since been probated and I am in full possession of his estate."

Dobson smiled inwardly at the complacency of this simple-minded young man. "What would he say if I told him of the millions waiting for him to take possession of?" he said to himself. Then aloud: "I should like to see the document, or a copy of it. That is, if you still wish me to take this matter up for you. You see, Mr. Dunbar, according to your story, having been a citizen of another country, the laws of that country might apply in certain contingencies. For instance, suppose, I say, *suppose* there should turn out to be an estate waiting for you in some other part of the world which even your protector was ignorant of at the time of his death. In such a case, I being familiar with the English practice, would be in a position to give you some advice as to any action you should take in this country before leaving for England; which, sooner or later you may be called upon to do."

"I see, sir; and I will secure a certified copy of the will, which is in the Surrogate's office, at once; although I feel quite sure that all such matters have already been provided for."

"You can't be too particular in such matters," the crafty old fellow said, carelessly. "So, get me a copy and bring it to me as soon as convenient. In the meantime I will be considering the next steps to be taken."

Saying which, he made a movement as if to indicate that the interview was at an end. When the young man had taken his departure, Dobson sat for a long time thinking matters over. "And what *is* to be done next?" he asked himself. "If I send that young booby over to London by

himself to take possession of his estate, he will be sure to fall in with some legal gentleman who will put ideas into his head which will first take him out of my hands, and then turn him against me. If I am any judge of character, *this* young fool is not a man to be trifled with. He would be easily led up till the time when he first began to suspect something was wrong; and then he would turn upon you like a grizzly bear. There would be no pity, no remorse, no sentiment about it at all. He would shoot a man in London who attempted to take advantage of him just as quickly as he would here; and that's altogether too quick to suit *my* purposes. If I should send him with a letter to Gow, that damned rascal would fleece him and I should never see a penny of the spoils. Of course, I *can't* send him to Dunbar, as that would be about the same thing as going myself. He would tell Dunbar where I am, and I could not ask him *not* to without exciting his suspicions. Its a puzzle any way you look at it."

It will be remembered that when Dobson was about to leave London he had drawn certain cheques which he had posted to a confidential agent to be disposed of in a manner he had directed while his plans for absconding were being matured. This man was named Sharnell; and was about as precious a rascal as walked the devious paths of a shady legal practitioner in London. The man had had some training in the law, just enough to make him dangerous to any interest entrusted to him except his own. He was desperately needy, a drunkard, and everything undesirable; but, he was a tool which Dobson could generally use to his own advantage, when he had money with which to pay for such use. Before finally leaving London this man had been of service to him in many ways; and, Dobson being in funds, he had been well paid for his trouble. He was now, for this reason, in a frame of mind, it was to be assumed, favorable to any new scheme Dobson might

have to propose. Dobson, seeing no advantage to be gained by it, had not confided to Sharnell his objective point in seeking a new field for his endeavors, thinking that when necessary he could always communicate with him; whereas, once having confided in him, it would be impossible to withdrawn his confidence; thus placing himself in the man's power.

It suddenly occurred to Dobson now that it might be well to ascertain as nearly as possible just what steps had been taken in the matter of his prosecution. Sharnell was hand in glove with every detective in London; was, in fact, half detective himself. It would be a comparatively easy matter for him to find out, for instance, whether or no a warrant had ever been taken out for his arrest, and if so, whether the government had taken the matter up, or it was to be only a private prosecution. In the latter case, it might be bought off, or the matter compromised. By the sudden and most important turn of the wheel which had just taken place, it was now of the last importance to him to be able not only to return to London, but to be able to comfortably remain there; unless, by doing so he were likely to stir up a prosecution, which, if left to itself would in time die a natural death. After thinking the matter carefully over, Dobson finally decided to write to this man. If, as a result of his having done so, he found it was safe for him to return to London, he would return, taking young Dillon with him in order to keep him absolutely under his own control. If it was *not* safe for him to return, some other arrangement could be made. Carrying out this plan of action, he therefore now sat down and wrote a long letter to his old friend, in which he fully set forth the pecuniary advantage it would be to both of them for him to be able to again walk the streets of dear old London in safety.

This letter having been written and despatched, Dobson

set himself, during the interval required for an answer to reach him, to carefully looking into every circumstance connected with the case which could be of the slightest possible advantage to him in the unraveling of the tangled skein of Dunbar's and his own affairs which he should have to undertake upon his return to his native land.

To begin with, he found the will in perfect order, as young Dillon had said it was. Having become perfectly familiar with the Dunbar estate from his former connection with it, it was a comparatively easy task for him to grasp the whole situation now. In reading over the will carefully, for instance, many matters which had perplexed both Dunbar and himself in connection with the former will were made perfectly clear. There had evidently been a quarrel over money matters, aggravated by some injudicious member of the family, which had so irritated the late Patrick Dunbar that he had simply made a new will for the express purpose of leaving his family out of it. A further search among young Dunbar's papers in London would undoubtedly bring to light a lot of correspondence relative to the whole matter. What a club all this was destined to become in the hands of an unprincipled man like Dobson in his future relations with young Dunbar!

In due course, an answer to his letter reached our friend Dobson, the sum and substance of which was that, although, as far as could be ascertained, no action had been taken against him, time enough had not yet elapsed to make it by any means sure that there would *not* be one taken if Dobson was seen in London by any one interested in him. Knowing as Dobson did, Sharnell's ability to get at the kernel of such matters, this in itself was reassuring news. It meant that with care, he, Dobson, might be in London a long time without being seen by anyone at all likely to make it his or her business to bring the fact of his having returned to the attention of the authorities. So

far, so good. The next piece of news contained in the letter was almost equally comforting; and that was the defalcation of his old friend Gow, and the fact that even *he* had not as yet been prosecuted by Dunbar. Either one of these two items of information, taken by itself, would hardly have established a safe departure for him in his present undertaking; but, taken together, and with the exercise of due caution on his part, as he approached the scene of action, there were not by any means insuperable barriers to his return to his native land; and he decided to go.

He sent for Dillon, therefore, and told him that with a view to saving him time and money, he had written to London to make certain inquiries in regard to his matters, which would have had to be made in any case, and which had now assumed proportions where in his opinion it would be well for both of them to immediately set out for London. He also told Dillon that in the interests of success in the whole matter, two or three things would have to be agreed upon then and there and as a condition of his taking the matter up at all. These things were, first, that Dillon was to pay all expenses, having before starting placed in his hands a retaining fee of three thousand dollars: He was to be in a position at all times to make additional payments, as the exigencies of the case demanded. Second, as the matter in question, being of a very delicate nature, the least indiscretion upon either of their parts might easily ruin all prospects of success, Dillon must solemnly engage not to interfere in any way in the conduct of the affair; but to submit in every detail and upon every occasion to Dobson's judgment. Third, not knowing London, it would be no part of Dillon's prerogative to dictate in any way their place of residence or their manner of life when they reached the place. Looking up a person who was lost, or was supposed to be lost in London, was a ticklish piece of business at the best, and must be approached

carefully. Dobson had a plan in his mind, which he did not care to reveal at the present time, and which he considered the most likely one to secure success; but which might make it necessary for them to live in out of the way places in London, to assume disguises, even to change their names; all of which possibilities being in a line with the achievement of their ultimate purposes, namely, the discovery of his sister, Dillon must pledge himself to faithfully act his part in, without a murmur or an objection. If he, Dillon, would enter into such an agreement as this, and cheerfully co-operate in all Dobson proposed, he thought he might assure him the accomplishment of the object he had in view. If he refused, why then he, Dobson, would drop the matter at once; and have nothing whatever to do with it.

It is needless to say that Dillon acquiesced in the plan; thus assuring to his companion freedom to take every precaution for his own safety in London; while, at the same time, to pursue a line of investigation and subsequent action much more far-reaching than Dillon had any suspicion of; but in which, for all that, he was deeply interested. So, all these matters being satisfactorily arranged, the two men left Virginia City, one bright day, and turned their faces in the direction of New York, as their first stopping place. Dobson, having, as has already been stated, assumed the name of Ferguson, upon his arrival in the country, could not now very easily divest himself of it, and, as one name was, under his present surroundings, as good as another to him, he resolved to retain it, until, at least, he saw good reason to again change it.

Upon the journey, Dobson studied his young traveling companion with all the interest a sharp old file would bring to the study of the character of a man whose life was henceforward to be so intimately associated with his own. He found him a simple-minded, honest young man, whose

life having been largely spent in a new country had been led in an out-of-doors, manly kind of way. His education had been carefully attended to, and he had read a good deal for a man of his years; but his knowledge of the real world, the world of big cities and of foreign lands, was extremely limited. He was still young, trustful and inexperienced; but a certain look he had in his eyes when aroused, or when he had occasion to feel he was being imposed upon, gave unmistakable evidence that he might prove a very uncomfortable person to deal with in any other manner than honestly and openly.

They arrived in New York in due time, where Dobson took pains to keep out of the way of any possible meeting with Mr. Moulton, and, at the same time took occasion to carefully observe the development of his young charge upon the occasion of his first experience of the life of a great city. He found him very adaptable and docile; very much interested in what he saw going on about him, and anxious to avoid appearing rustic. They remained some two or three weeks in the town, during which time Dobson had time to indirectly take a look at some of the property belonging to his young friend, and, what was more to the point, to receive another letter from his agent in London, Sharnell, putting him in possession of the news up to date. Sharnell had by chance run against Inspector Evans, and had gleaned from him the fact that Dunbar had not as yet prosecuted Gow, which was tantamount, in his opinion to saying that he was not of the prosecuting kind, and was hardly likely to now, after a lapse of so long a time, do anything otherwise than to sit down and pocket his loss. Sharnell advised his friend, however, to take no unnecessary chances; and, above all, in no way to make himself known to his old friends, upon his arrival in London. An appointment for a meeting was also made at a suitable time and place, allowing time, of course, for

Dobson to accomplish his journey. As this had the effect of still further setting his mind at rest, and as there was nothing now to be gained by a longer sojourn in New York, they secured passage upon a steamer for Liverpool, where they arrived safely, and immediately proceeded on to London. Here naturally enough, Dobson's troubles began. He took his young friend to a small tavern he knew of in Aldersgate, which possessed the double advantage of being in the city, and consequently out of the way of most of his old west end associates, *and* of being near the east end, in case a speedy flight to cover should by any possibility arise.

After allowing a few days to intervene in which to in a measure accustom his companion to the place, and in which to replenish their wardrobe, and other little details of the kind, Dobson notified Sharnell of his desire to see him. They met at a little public house on the Commercial road, which both of them knew of as a place where they were likely to be undisturbed. Dobson had entered the place first, and was interested to see whether or no his old friend would recognize him. In a few moments he had the satisfaction of seeing Sharnell pass by him as if he had been an absolute stranger, and take a seat at a table in another part of the room, where he sat down, ordered his customary drop of Scotch, lighted his pipe, and settled leisurely down to wait for the arrival of his friend. This proved conclusively to Dobson that his changed appearance had deceived at least *one* of his former friends, and one, too, who was looking for him. He was much encouraged by this little episode, and now, taking up his glass and approaching Sharnell, sat down at his table, and said: "Well, my boy, I'm glad to see you."

"Good God, Dobson, is that you?" asked Sharnell.

"Yes, indeed. Why, do you find me much changed?"

"Never should have known you in the world; word of honor."

"So much the better, my boy; for if a sharp, wide-awake chap like you doesn't recognize me, the others are not likely to. Well, what's the latest news. Anything doing?"

"No, quiet as a country churchyard at midnight. But, let me warn you that Scotland Yard is a little put out that that young fool Dunbar has not prosecuted that young rascal Gow. At first they thought of getting the government to take the matter up; but they had no evidence. You see, Dunbar's having all the forged bills in his possession, there could be nothing to proceed upon. Dunbar is either an ass and is willing to allow himself to be robbed by his friends with impunity, or he is a deep 'un and is biding his time. In either case, you are far better off to keep under cover until we know more of his plans. Although I did not recognize you at first sight, that's no reason that Inspector Evans would not. He's as sharp as a terrier after a rat, and if he once caught sight of you, he'd follow you until he was absolutely satisfied that Dunbar could not be persuaded to take proceedings against you. So, take my tip, and lay low for a while. I will keep you posted from time to time, as long as there is any danger to be apprehended; and now I have told you all I know. What's your little game, and where do I come into it?"

Here Sharnell settled down into a comfortable but expectant attitude, as if, having entirely emptied the secret places of his mind for the benefit of his friend, he expected his friend to at least do as much for him. Dobson, knowing the man he had to deal with, had recognized from the first the unwisdom of pursuing his old policy of only half trusting the man he now wished to use not only as a tool, but to make his accomplice. He was fully in Sharnell's power. A word, a look from him would betray him. He

was a vindictive man, one who resented a slight, or a half confidence; but a deep fellow, who would give no notice of his resentment until it was time to act; and then, one who would act quickly, decidedly, and remorselessly. He would put up with no nonsense; whereas, if trusted, and particularly if he saw his reward in it, he would be faithful. Dobson fully intended to get him so tangled up with himself that any piece of treachery he might ultimately contemplate would fall quite as much upon himself as upon his friend. Having once taken a decided step, Dobson was not the man to retrace it; so he began:

"Well, Orlando, I've the prettiest little bit of business to lay before you you ever heard of; much less had a hand in."

"Have you though?" said Sharnell, rubbing his hands with interest, "Well, I can tell you, it's come in the nick of time. I'm about as low in finances as I have ever been in my life."

"Well, my boy, if we play our cards properly, neither you nor I need ever do a hand's stroke of work again in our lives? How does *that* strike you?"

"How does that strike me? How does a good juicy bone strike a half-starved dog? Well, let's have your story. I'm all attention."

They were sitting in a public house of the lowest class in the great thoroughfare of the east end; in a low-studded room, a sanded floor, an atmosphere charged with the ancient reek of stale liquor and vile tobacco. A few miserable creatures of both sexes were lounging about, more interested in themselves, apparently, than in anything Dobson and his companions might have to say; but, for all that, both of these men now made a very careful inspection of the surroundings to see that there were no eavesdroppers about. Having fully satisfied themselves upon this point,

they called for a fresh supply of liquor each, and Dobson began his story:

"I didn't consider it safe to entrust what I have to say to a letter, my boy, or you should have had the story I'm going to tell you some time ago; but, as you could hardly have acted upon it until I reached London, it's just as well I waited; as a word of mouth story in business of this kind is always better than a written one, as you well know."

Sharnell nodded assent, and Dobson went on: "You have heard me speak of young Dunbar's affairs sufficiently to know that he is a very rich man, haven't you?"

"Yes, I have; until you relieved him of a good bit of his wealth, I assume he was rich; very rich. Well?"

"Well, what if I should tell you he wasn't worth a five pun note, and that you and I are at present the only two men in the world to know it?"

Sharnell perceptibly brightened up at the auspicious opening of his companion's story. Here was a field of action he was peculiarly at home in. Dobson continued: "What if I should tell you that Dunbar inherited from his uncle under an early and informal will, executed long before the testator had become a rich man, and, consequently, long before the estate young Dunbar has come into possession of ever existed or was thought of? What if I should farther enlighten you by saying that by an accident I have discovered a later will, most carefully and legally signed, sealed and delivered, and all the rest of it; and, what is much more to the point, the heir apparent himself, in *propria persona*? What, in conclusion, if I were to tell you that the heir, the legitimate heir, was in total ignorance of the existence of the immense estate awaiting him, and that I was the only man, woman or child in the world who could tell him of his good fortune? Should or should not you say that with such a lot of trumps in our hands

we ought certainly to capture at least a few tricks in the game?"

Here Dobson paused to take breath, and to watch the effect his disclosure had so far produced upon his listener. Sharnell's eyes glistened, his breath came in short respirations, and he showed every evidence of suppressed but intense interest. "Well," the latter exclaimed, "that's about as interesting a fairy tale as I've listened to for many a day. But, is it any more than a fairy tale? That's what I want to know?" Then, with an ugly look in his eyes, in which greed and incredulity were about equally blended, he said: "See here, Dobson, if you have patched up this story in order to pull the wool over my eyes while you use me for some purpose I know nothing of, but where you are to get the ha'-pence, and I am going to get the kicks and cuffs, as has happened in some of our deals, I warn you you have made a mistake. I'm in no mood for that kind of a game, nor to be trifled with at all, in any manner whatsoever. I am older and poorer than when you last employed me; and you, well, you're not the man you were, by any manner of means. You can neither bully me, nor use me, nor dupe me, as you once could, and so don't try; for I shan't put up with it, that's all."

"If, instead of working yourself up into a state of mind about a lot of matters long since dead and buried, and about *another* lot of things which are only assumptions on your part, you would listen to the details of this matter, and assist me with your skill in bringing it to a successful finish, you would be the same cool-headed old Orlando Sharnell I have always found you."

"*Now*, you begin to talk as if you meant business," growled Sharnell, who evidently *wished* to believe the story he had heard; but who had had his hopes dashed too often to fully permit of his doing so.

CHAPTER XVI.

"And now," said Dobson, changing his position so as to be able to look his companion fully in the face, "let's discuss our campaign and plan of action. You see, Orlando, unless carefully handled, this matter may easily prove a boomerang to me, and a disappointment to *you*. The chief question for us, naturally enough, is where is the money coming from? Dunbar is hardly going to pay us any for informing him that he is a pauper; and the real heir at present *has* no money, that is he hasn't by any means *enough* money to pay us with. Now, it seems to me, the only way to touch money is to get near enough to where it is to be touched. In other words, to get near Dunbar. The question is, how may this be accomplished?"

"Why isn't the real heir, the man we are to put in possession of his own, the man for us to buckle to?"

"I've thought of that, and in due time we surely ought to get something out of him; but, Orlando, you and I know enough of the law's delay to appreciate how long a time may elapse before the proper owner of the estate ever comes into possession of it, that is, supposing the man already in possession wishes to contest the matter. I don't know how you are situated financially; but I must have money at once; for I've long since come to the end of my rope."

"That's my case," growled Sharnell. "Where is the heir apparent?"

"He's here in London."

"What's his name?"

"His name is Dillon."

"Hasn't he any ready money?"

"Yes, he has a little. He paid my passage out of it from the States. He is paying my living expenses here; but, the trouble is he doesn't know of his fortune, and, naturally wouldn't believe in it sufficiently to advance much money upon his chance of securing it. That is, I don't think he would. Another thing, he's in London upon another piece of business altogether. He's looking for a lost relative, and I'm helping him. For me to turn suddenly round and tell him a large fortune as well as a sister is waiting for him in London, would, I fear, excite his suspicions, and do more harm than good."

"Yes, I see."

The men were silent for a while, and then Dobson asked, "Where's Gow?"

"Gow has disappeared. Inspector Evans says he's on the continent. Whether this is a guess or is based upon actual knowledge, I don't know. These men are generally wrong at first, in looking up a man; although, I admit, if money enough is to be spent, they are apt to accomplish something in the end. One thing I am pretty sure of, however, and that is that *I* can find Gow if we really need him."

"Well, then, set to work to find him; for, its quite safe to say we shall need him before we've done with this business."

With this parting instruction, an agreement for each, as far as possible, to prepare a plan of action; and with an appointment to meet at the same place upon the ensuing day, the men parted. Sharnell had not asked for Dobson's address, much to the latter's satisfaction. Although the men had, by tacit agreement, taken different directions upon leaving their rendezvous, and although Dobson, suspecting that Sharnell might follow him, had, when oppor-

tunity offered, turned round to ascertain whether or no he was doing so, and had not felt absolutely safe from pursuit until he had placed many a turning and winding between them, he *was* followed for all that. Sharnell had fully made up his mind, now that fortune had again thrown his old friend in his way, never to lose sight of him again until he had squeezed the very last drop of blood out of him. With this laudable aim in view, he had employed for a few shillings one of his retainers to follow the man from whom he should part at the door of the public house at which the meeting had taken place. So, Dobson plodded along in the direction of his hotel, after he had satisfied himself that Sharnell was not upon his trail, where he arrived in due time, and found Dillon waiting for him. Half an hour afterwards Sharnell was informed of the name of the hotel at which his friend was staying, the assumed name under which he was staying there, and of the general appearance of the young man with whom he was associated.

"And now," said this astute gentleman to himself, "the sport begins; and, unless I am a bigger fool than I think I am, I shall soon know more of Dobson's little game than he knows himself."

He had been quietly awaiting upon a certain street corner for the return of his spy. When he had pumped him dry of information in regard to Dobson's movements, he said, "There's a man named Gow, Sidney Gow, who disappeared some months ago. He's wanted for forgery, or he *may* be. The police think he is in Paris. I think he is skulking *here* in the east end. A couple of sovereigns to you, if you'll find him and bring me to him."

The man asked for his, Gow's, general description, which Sharnell gave him.

"Is there a woman following 'im?" asked the man.

"I think very likely," replied Sharnell, with a sneer, "for he was always following the women."

"Well, sir, there's a man taken lodgings in the very street I 'appen to live in, Cutter Street. 'E's been a toff, right enough. I can tell *that* from the cut of 'is toggs and 'is manners. 'E's got a false moustache and a rough suit of clothes on, and 'e keeps to 'is 'ouse day times; but 'e goes out nights for a bit of a stroll, and whenever he does, the woman follows 'im. She's a sly one, an no mistake. She never makes a slip, she's an old 'and at the game, I should say. She 'as lodgings in the 'ouse across the way, 'an she keeps a sharp lookout upon 'im as if her life depended upon it."

"That sounds like the man I'm looking for," said Sharnell, "but find out the name he has taken his lodgings under, and also as much about his doings as possible. Discover the woman's name also; and meet me at the public house you saw me coming out of just now, at seven o'clock this evening."

Sharnell here paid the man for the service he had already rendered, and left him. At the hour appointed, he met him again:

"Well," said Sharnell.

"Man's known as Stanford at 'is lodgin' 'ouse. 'Ad a little money when he came there, but he begins to show signs of bein' 'ard up now. 'As grown very seedy; an 'as been ailing for some time. Seldom goes out now. Is lyin' very low, as if afraid of bein' followed. Probably suspects, or 'as seen the 'oman across the street takin' an interest in 'im."

"And the woman?" asked Sharnell.

"The 'ooman is still on the lookout. Gave 'er name as Marley, Mrs. Marley, sir. Tall, fine-lookin' 'ooman; been a lady, I dare say."

"Very well, and now take me to what's his name's lodg-

ings, Stanford's; and if he's the man I'm looking for, you get your two sovereigns; if not, not."

At this, the two men started out to look for Cutter Street, where they arrived in due time. Upon the house being pointed out in which Gow had taken refuge, Sharnell requested his friend to wait outside while he was absent; and then knocked at the door. A sickly looking woman, with an infant in her arms answered the summons. As soon as the door was unfastened, Sharnell, with a deftness which spoke of long practice, pushed his way into the hallway, closing the door behind him. The woman gave a half stifled scream, and stood facing him in the half light. "Don't be alarmed, madam," said Sharnell, "I'm only looking for my friend, Mr. Stanford; and, as I know he is here, and as I have something of importance and for his own good to say to him, *and* as I shrewdly suspect he is at this moment listening at the head of the stairs to what I am saying, he will save my time and his own by coming down at once. My name is Sharnell, and I'm a friend."

The latter part of his speech was spoken quite loud enough for anyone standing at the head of the stairs to hear him; and, as he had evidently anticipated, it produced an immediate effect.

"Hello, is that you Sharnell?" said a voice. "This way, old man; I'm glad to see you. Mind the stairs."

The woman, by this time evidently satisfied that the intruder was really a friend, now retired, and Sharnell ascended the rickety stairway.

"Who'd ever have thought of seeing *you* here?" asked Gow of his newly found friend, as he invited him into his room, and closed the door. "How the devil did you dig me up in this out-of-the-way place."

"I've dug up a lot of persons in my day, as you well know, Gow. *How* I did it doesn't so much matter. But now to business. You don't, somehow, look over pros-

perous. What if I could put you in the way of turning an honest pound or two, would you be game for a little risk, in case any was to be taken?"

Gow looked at his friend and then looked at *himself*. If ever a man, to judge from outside appearances, needed a friend, he did. He had grown shabby to a degree that was noticeable even in his present squalid surroundings. He was also thin and cadaverous, as if he had not enjoyed a full meal for many a long day. The room was small, ill-smelling, poorly furnished, miserable. There could hardly be imagined a more distressful position than his. This was judging from the outside. What was going on *inside* could easily be divined by the hunted look in the man's eyes, the utter hopelessness of his attitude both mental and physical.

"Sharnell," he said, after a pause, "For God's sake, tell me what you want, and have done with it. If you've come here to give me away, say so like a man; I can stand it. In fact, I'm so beaten I'd almost made up my mind to give myself up, as it is. I know you are needy like myself, and I shan't think so very hard of you if you turn a little money out of my misfortunes; but don't keep me in suspense. Come out, like a man, and tell me what's your game."

"You fool," said Sharnell, contemptuously, "you're no sportsman at all, at all. One can do with a man who takes a chance, and is sport enough to pay the price, if luck goes against him; but, to see a man knock under, as you appear to be doing, before he even knows whether he's beaten or not; why, he's no good. That's *my* opinion of him, at least."

"What do you mean?"

"What do I mean? Why, what are you doing here, hiding from what, running away from what? You've done something you think you ought to get into trouble for, and

so you take it for granted that the whole police force of London is in full cry after you. Now, tell me, what real grounds have you to support this assumption?"

Gow looked rather sheepish, as he answered: "I know I am followed. I have seen a person following me."

"Yes, a woman."

"How do you know it's a woman?" asked Gow, excitedly.

"How do I know anything? I take the trouble and I pay the price to find out, That's how."

"Yes, but this woman?"

"She's someone you've played some dirty trick upon, I fancy. You know, Gow, you've been up to some rather shady tricks in your day."

"Yes, possibly; but I don't seem to know *this* person, somehow; and if I'd have played her a trick, as you put it, I'd be likely to. That's clear enough, I should say."

"In other words, you think she's connected with the police?"

"Yes, I do."

Sharnell's plan was to relieve the pressure of anxiety upon Gow's mind just enough to make him a useful tool in his hands for the accomplishment of his purpose. To have relieved him entirely would have been to render him indocile to his control. "Well, it may be so, of course. There's no end to the ingenuity of the police in looking a man up when he's wanted. However, we'll leave that matter to be discussed after I've told you my plan. There's no one about to listen, is there?"

"No," said Gow, "I think not." He went to the door, however, and suddenly opened it. No one was there.

"All right," said Sharnell, when he had returned and taken his seat. "And now listen to what I have to say: You had a little business with one Patrick Dunbar. You've been in partnership with him unknown to him,

and have occasionally signed the firm's name to acceptances of which he knew nothing."

Gow gave a startled look at this revelation, and then a despondent one, as if recognizing the hopelessness of concealing anything from the knowledge of the man before him.

"Well, am I right, so far?" asked Sharnell.

"Yes. There's no good trying to keep any of my affairs from you; and there's no good in asking you to tell me how you found all this out, for you won't tell me."

Sharnell grinned at his friend's perplexity, but went on: "Yes, I happen to know something of the affair. 'Twould be a pity if I *didn't* know something of what was going on in London, as long as I've been in the town. Well, now suppose that I was in a way to change the position of your affairs with Dunbar to such an extent that instead of his holding the whip over you, you should hold it over him. He is now your master, soul and body. He's the very last man in the world you would care to meet; and if you *did* meet him, you would expect him to call a policeman and give you in charge. Am I right or wrong?"

"Hang it, you're right."

"Well, if instead of your being afraid of him, I could so arrange matters that he would be afraid of you, it would be a considerable improvement over the present state of affairs, wouldn't it?"

"Of course it would."

"Of course it would. There can be no possible question about that. But there's a little tail hanging to it."

"There always is in such cases."

"Yes, always, Gow," said Sharnell, looking him full in the face, as if to lend impressiveness to what he had to say, "you are in very serious trouble. You have committed a little, well, call it 'indiscretion,' for which you could be

sent away from five to seven years at one of the penal institutions of our country. Whether or no any active steps have been taken up to this time against you, is wholly a secondary consideration, because both you and I know that such steps *can* be taken at any time, if they have not been already. You are afraid to walk the streets of London, and you've no money to leave it with. Now, admitting all this, what would it be worth to you to secure your own freedom from prosecution and to put your possible prosecutor in a position where he would be practically powerless against you?"

Gow thought a moment, and then replied: "Why don't you come out with your proposition, man? Tell me how this can be done, and name your terms. You can't frighten me any more than I'm already frightened, nor can you tell me anything about this miserable affair of mine that I don't already know. So, for the devil's sake, give over tormenting me, and come to business."

Sharnell, evidently satisfied by the manner in which Gow said this, that he had reduced him to a proper sense of his helplessness, now assumed the dry, hard tone of a business man trying to drive a sharp bargain with a man wholly in his power. "I'm in possession of a secret," he went on, "which Dunbar, unless I am wholly out in my calculations, would give half of his fortune to know. If I put you in a position to tell him this secret and to become the administrator, so to speak, of it, would you divide profits with me squarely, or would you fleece me, as you have fleeced most of your friends?"

"By God, Sharnell, I'd be square with you, old man."

There was the tone of conviction in the manner in which Gow said this which not infrequently accompanies a promise made under compulsion. But Sharnell recognized the impossibility of getting a more binding one, and proceeded to take a step from which he well knew there would be no

drawing back. A secret once told ceases to be a secret; as goes without saying.

"Gow," he said, "a will has been discovered which supersedes the one under which Dunbar came into possession of his property. The real heir is a man named Dillon; and he doesn't yet know of the fortune awaiting him. You and I and one other man are the only persons who know of this. The other party is a man whom neither you nor I need feel any hesitation in cutting out of his share in this little piece of business; for he would cut *us* out, or even cut our throats, if he could."

"Who is it?"

"Never mind at present. There are reasons why it is just as well you should know no more of this matter just now than will serve our purposes. What I have laid out for you to do is to go to Dunbar, tell him of the dangerous position he is in, and offer to help him out of it; for a consideration, of course."

"Yes, but how are we to help him out of it?"

"I confess I don't quite know as yet. We must leave that part of the business to ripen a little. The great thing is to secure Dunbar's ear before the other fellow does; to head him off, so to speak. One advantage to you in being the first to tell him of his danger will be to secure yourself from prosecution on account of the old affairs. He could hardly take action against a man who came to warn him of such an important matter as this new will."

"You said something about a certain risk I would have to assume in this matter. What is it?"

"There are two risks; first, the risk of Dunbar's taking immediate action against you as soon as he comes to know you are in town. He has been told you are on the continent, or God knows where. Its a much less troublesome matter to call a policeman and give a man in charge than to set the machinery of the law in motion to follow one

who is supposed to be already out of the country. 'The second risk may arise when we come to carry out our agreement in regard to securing Dunbar in the possession of his estate. If the real heir has to be made to disappear for a time, or—forever; for instance. Do you comprehend?"

"Yes, I think I do; but—"

"But what?"

"Well, I was only wondering whether or no a better bargain could be made with this man Dillon?"

"How are you to do this? He has no money at present, and can only have it as the result of having dispossessed Dunbar. Once aware of our secret, he could go on and secure the estate, and *after* he had secured it, snap his fingers in our faces."

"Yes; I see."

"Besides which, we don't know the man; and it would be a difficult matter to come to know him at present, as he is well watched."

Gow now seemed to be immersed in thought. At last he said:

"What kind of a proposal do you consider it best to make to Dunbar? I mean in regard to our compensation?"

"Well, there again, I'm a little at a loss what to say. It ought certainly to be a round sum; especially as there will be two at least to share it, and possibly three."

"Very well, Sharnell, I'll take the matter up. Situated as I am, I can't be much worse off, and if I get into further trouble, why, you must do the best you can to get me out of it; that's all. Call here in two or three days and I'll tell you the result of my first interview with Dunbar. That is, I will, if I'm not detained."

As this appeared to be about as far as they could get at present, Sharnell now took his departure. He found his man waiting patiently at the door, to whom he duly paid the promised fee; and, after instructing him to keep a

close watch upon three persons, namely, Gow, the woman across the street, and young Dillon, he started away. He had only advanced a short distance, however, before a woman, carefully veiled, accosted him and asked him to direct her to some street he had never heard the name of. The meeting, although so managed as to appear accidental, occurred under a street lamp; where Sharnell, not being disguised in any way, could easily be recognized; whereas the woman's face, owing to her veil, could not be seen.

CHAPTER XVII.

The adjourned meeting between Dobson and Sharnell took place the next day as agreed. Sharnell, for reasons of his own, now desiring to gain time, told Dobson that he had set to work to find Gow with every prospect of success, and urged upon him the advantages to be secured by approaching Dunbar through him. As Dobson was already prepared to admit the force of the arguments advanced by his friend, they soon came to the unanimous decision to postpone any definite action until Gow's services could be secured. Sharnell gave Dobson an address that would always find him in case of need; and the men separated, each suspicious of the other while recognizing his inability to do without him.

In the meantime, events were occurring in Cutter Street which were destined to have considerable bearing upon the futures of several of the actors in our little drama. Catherine Marley who had in the first place followed Gow in his flight into the east end, had taken temporary lodgings in a house across the street from the one in which Gow had secured a lodgment. From this place she had been able to watch the movements of our friend Gow unobserved and unsuspected for some time; but finally Gow had begun to feel that he was watched. Catherine's precaution to avoid recognition by means of covering her face with a veil and by appearing on the street only after night-fall, had been so far successful as to still leave Gow in ignorance of her identity, but she had considerably disturbed his

sense of security; as has been related in his interview with Sharnell.

The day after this interview, Catherine casually asked her landlady whether she knew the tenant of the house across the street, and was agreeably surprised to hear that Gow's landlady was her landlady's sister; also to ascertain the fact that they were upon the best of terms, the one with the other. Catherine had had her curiosity very much aroused by the visit Gow had received the evening before, and, as has been seen, had taken measures to get a look at the features of the visitor. She had had a good look at Sharnell; but, as she had never seen the man before, she had gained very little information by it. She had made up her mind, however, that the visit, the first and only one Gow had received, meant something; and determined, if possible to find out what it was. The means of accomplishing this end were much simplified by the revelation of the fact of the relationship of the respective landladies of the two houses. She told *her* landlady that she was interested in the lodger in her sister's house, and would very much like to be placed in a position where she could observe his movements at closer range than from where she was now situated. She promised to make it worth her while in a pecuniary way, and her landlady appeared to jump at this, as in a very few moments after the offer had been made, Gow's landlady was sitting in her sister's sitting room engaged in a close conversation with Mrs. Marley, aforesaid. The negotiations took a favorable turn from the start, about equally owing to three things, namely, the mercenary consideration, the fact that Gow, or Standford, as he was known to his landlady, had never in the least gone out of his way to placate this lady, and was considerably in her debt; and finally, natural feminine curiosity. In almost less time than it takes to tell it, therefore, a highly satisfactory arrangement was arrived at, by

which, when there was anything to hear or see going on "chez" Gow, Catherine should be duly notified and introduced into the closet of a room adjoining Gow's from which coign of vantage every word of conversation conducted in his room could be distinctly heard. As evidence of the truth of what she had said, she now went on artlessly to tell Catherine a good deal of what *had* been said at the interview of the preceding evening which she had overheard from the very place in which she promised to station Catherine. From this Catherine was now informed not only of the name of Gow's visitor, but of the secret he had divulged to him; and last of all, of the plot against a gentleman named Dunbar they were hatching between them. She also heard of the appointment between the men for another meeting a few days after the interview just alluded to.

It is needless to state that all this had the effect of throwing her into a state of the most intense excitement. So much so, indeed, that for a time she was rendered incapable of anything like deliberate action. This lasted, however, only for a time; and then she fully recovered her nerve, and began a systematic canvass of the whole situation. Partly from the fact that the information had come to her in rather a fragmentary and disjointed condition, and partly from its own inherent marvellousness, she had failed to connect the name of the real heir to Dunbar's estate with anyone in whom she was interested; the name itself had been very partially heard by the eaves-dropper, and imperfectly conveyed to her; but then there had been no mistake or uncertainty about *Dunbar's* name; and to Dunbar she now determined to go, before, if possible, Gow should be able to reach him.

The season was winter, and the Dunbars were at their residence in Portland Place. Hastily arriving at the conclusion that Gow, in carrying out his promise to see Dun-

bar, would probably first write to him requesting an interview, thus allowing some time to elapse between the dispatching and receipt of the correspondence necessary to appoint a rendezvous, she determined to proceed at once to Portland Place, resolved to wait for the possible chance of meeting Dunbar in the vicinity of his own home. If necessary, she would go boldly to his house and ask for him; but, in any event, she would see him and see him at once; even if he were not in London and she should be compelled to first find his address, and then follow him to it. Carrying out this plan of action, she took the underground to the Portland Street station. There she alighted from the train, ascended into the street, took rather a despairing look out into the fog, and then set out upon her errand. Arriving at Portland Place, she lingered about the vicinity of Dunbar's house for a while, as she had set her mind upon doing; and then, as she began to lose hope of meeting Dunbar, went to the house, rang the door bell and requested the servant who answered the summons to take her name to his master and say that she wished to see him upon important business. The man looked at her as if undecided whether to comply with her request; but Catherine was in no mood to be refused, and entering the reception room sat down with the air of a person who fully intended to wait until she had accomplished the object of her visit, come what might. The man disappeared, and soon returned with the announcement that Mr. Dunbar would see her directly. In a few minutes he entered the room. He greeted his visitor cordially, but with evident surprise and curiosity to ascertain the nature of her business. She did not keep him long in suspense. "Mr. Dunbar," she began, "of course it is unnecessary to tell you that nothing short of the most pressing business would have caused me to disturb you at your home. It seems to be my fate

to be a bearer of evil tidings, but I cannot help it; and I am afraid I shall be compelled in your interest to warn you of another plot against you, and one of a much more serious nature than any hitherto attempted."

Dunbar looked alarmed but smiled as he said: "In any event, I can only have to thank you for the loyalty which prompts your coming here to warn me of any danger, whatever it is."

Catherine gave him a grateful look as if to say: "I knew you would receive my offices in the spirit in which I offered them," and then went on: "Let me begin by asking a question: 'Have you heard from or seen Mr. Gow within the past few days?'"

"No, I certainly have not. Why do you ask?"

"Because, my intense desire to see you before he had communicated with you is the reason of my otherwise inexcusably ill-timed visit. I had every belief that he would, in the carrying out of the plot I speak of, either write you or call upon you. It is a great relief to my mind to find that up to this time he has not done so."

Hardly were these words out of her mouth than the door opened, the servant entered and placed a telegram in Dunbar's hands and retired. Asking her permission to do so, as if she had been a duchess, he tore open the envelope and having hastily scanned it, handed it to Catherine to read. It ran as follows:

"Most pressing matter in which you are vitally interested demands that I have an interview with you at once. Meet me at Craven Hotel, nine this evening. S. G."

"I fully expected this," said Catherine quietly, as she handed him back the message. "And, now," she went on, "listen attentively to what I have to say; for, if I am not very much mistaken, the greatest crisis of your life is at hand. In a word, Gow, with a man named Shar-

nell, whom I do not know, have found, or *think* they have, an heir under a later will than the one under which you inherited your estate. Some man has arrived recently from America with the supposed heir, whose name I have not accurately ascertained as yet, but which I think I shall be able to get at in due time. At any rate, these men, Gow, Sharnell and the other one who says he has discovered the true heir have hatched a plot to make you pay them for buying off the man they represent as the true heir, or of disposing of him in such a manner that he will never trouble you again. It appears that the man in question does not yet know that he is the heir. This is the plot; and now what is to be done? I confess that I am at my wits' ends."

"And may I ask you how you came by this most extraordinary piece of information?"

Catherine went on and told him with evident reluctance but with perfect frankness the story of her having followed Gow to his hiding place, and of her subsequent meeting with his landlady and the disclosures she had made. There was an air of simplicity and honesty in the way she told her story which was irresistible. Taken in connection with Gow's telegram, a most unexpected event in itself under the circumstances, Dunbar could not fail to be impressed with the gravity of the crisis he appeared to be called upon to face. He had never from the start been quite able to take seriously his good fortune in coming into his uncle's estate. He had become accustomed to comparative poverty by long association. To become suddenly rich had appeared to him the unnatural rather than the natural turn for his fortunes to take. Not having been born in the purple, he had not taken to it by adoption; and had never felt quite at ease in his present style of living. Naturally a modest, hard-working man, he had by no

means allowed himself to be spoiled by his sudden accession to wealth; but, on the contrary, had often secretly regretted that he no longer had his way to make in the world, as he formerly had. All this being true, it was not to be surprised at that the possibility of the loss of his newly acquired wealth occasioned him no excessive grief. His mother and sisters were the ones who would suffer most by the change; for they *had* adapted themselves, as women have a remarkable faculty for doing, to the sudden rise of their fortunes. As to his wife, the manner in which she continued to be treated by the women of his family would render a valid excuse for breaking off relations with them appear as almost cheap at the price of his financial downfall. With all these considerations in view, then, he said to Catherine who had been carefully watching his face for any indication of what was going on in his mind: "Mrs. Marley, something, I cannot explain what, tells me that this is not a trumped up conspiracy, but an actual, although I confess an unexpected turn of the wheel of fortune. Somehow, there has been a theatrical element in the affair from the beginning, which has prepared me for a *coup-de-theâtre* at the finish. I am a man of simple tastes, and it is difficult for me to adapt them to new conditions. Feeling as I do, this new turn matters have taken does not affect me as it would another. I mean by that, that if I am called upon to give up the wealth I have enjoyed for a few years, I shall survive the shock; and, incidentally, I should not go very far out of my way to prevent it."

"Yes, I think I can understand your point of view; but that, of course, is assuming that you are to have fair play. You would not allow yourself to be imposed upon by a lot of conspirators, I hope?"

"No, certainly not; that is, if I could help it. But let us look at this matter analytically: It seems to me to

turn upon the question as to whether the claim of this newly found heir can be sustained by evidence, or not. If it can, no one in the world would more readily abdicate in favor of the true heir than myself. If, on the contrary, there is no evidence, no one would make a much stiffer fight. If, however, as I shrewdly suspect to be the case, these men have really discovered a new heir under a later will, and are trying to make money out of me by blackmail, or by leading me to suppose they will prevent the new heir from making his claim by the payment of a large sum of money, why then all I have to say is that they have come to the wrong market, and they will not succeed."

"Well then, how do you intend to meet the matter? for *some* notice must be taken of it."

"Certainly there must; and unless you see some reason for my not doing so which I have overlooked, I intend to keep the appointment Gow has made for us this evening at nine o'clock."

"I see no objection to that, now that you have been warned; and I only thank God that I was permitted to reach you in time to put you on your guard."

At this, Catherine rose to take her departure. "I will communicate anything new I happen to hear," she said, "and you have my address in case of need. All I ask of you, therefore, is to stand your ground and not allow yourself to be victimized by these men."

"I promise you that I will not, and, whatever happens, I shall be deeply grateful to you for the interest you have taken in my affairs. I shall never forget it."

As they rose to leave the room, Dunbar noticed that the door leading into the hall, which he had taken pains to close at the beginning of the interview, was now partly open. The servant in leaving the room after bringing in the telegram had evidently, by accident or design, failed to close it. The matter was explained, however, by finding

Mrs. Dunbar in the hall in such a position relatively to the door in question as to leave no possible doubt as to the fact of her having been eavesdropping.

"What does this mean, mother?" demanded Dunbar, indignantly.

"It means that I consider it an insult to your mother, your sisters and your wife for you to bring your female bachelor friends to the house where there are decent women. I, for one, will not put up with it."

Dunbar tried hard to restrain himself, but it was beyond his strength: "Mrs. Dunbar," he said, trembling with indignation, "permit me to present my very good friend Mrs. Marley; who, at great inconvenience to herself, has come to warn me of an impending danger; a danger to me and to us all. As you treat this lady, you treat me; and I demand an instant apology for the totally uncalled for insult you have just put upon her. Will you make it, or not?"

There was a tone of authority in his voice and a fire in his eye which brooked no denial. Added to this, possibly, was the influence of the warning which she herself must have overheard. She hesitated an instant, just long enough for Dunbar to say, peremptorily: "I am waiting for your apology," when she suddenly appeared to see the matter in another light; for she said, as humbly as a woman of her makeup could be brought to say anything:

"Well, I—er apologize. I—er."

"That will do; and now be good enough to ring the bell for William to call a cab for Mrs. Marley."

This little act of submission evidently called for a greater effort than the apology; but Mrs. Dunbar rendered it, and the visitor was shown to the door and placed in her cab with all the honors.

"And now, mother," said Dunbar, after the cab had driven away, the door closed and the servant had taken his departure," this is as good a time as any to tell you

that the insult you have offered to an unoffending creature who humiliated herself to put us on our guard against an impending danger, is the last straw which has broken the camel's back. If there is a home left to us, after this matter has been sifted to the bottom, Helena and I will no longer share it with you. You and the girls will go your ways; my wife and I will go ours. So please take notice."

"Of course, you don't mean what you say, Pads. You wouldn't leave us to starve?"

"If what I fear comes to pass, we'll stand a fair chance of starving until some arrangement can be made by which the family can be supported. If it does *not* come to pass, there is no danger of starvation for any of us; but my wife and I will have an establishment of our own in either case. It has been coming to this for some time, and now it has come; and you have only yourself to thank for it."

Mrs. Dunbar whimpered out a reminder of what was due to a mother, and then broke into an hysterical fit which had the effect of bringing the two young ladies to her side, and would have ended doubtless in a commotion of very considerable dimensions if Dunbar had allowed himself to be drawn into it; but he had other matters to occupy his attention. He locked himself in his study, and going to the old tin despatch box in which he had found his uncle's will, now took out all the papers contained in it, and began a careful inspection of them. At last he came to a package of letters, musty and yellow with age, but labeled: "Letters from my brother Patrick." Upon opening this package evidence began to come to light and to multiply, as one by one he read these letters, of, first, the old misunderstanding between the brothers owing to money matters, then of a time when Patrick had begun to repay his debts to his brother, and, finally, a letter in which he remitted the last amount due him, together with a sum more than sufficient to pay the interest upon his entire former indebtedness.

At the end of this letter, was a paragraph which ran as follows: "And now, having discharged my debt in full with interest, like an honest man, it would give me great pleasure if I could be assured from you that all our old misunderstandings were at an end. They certainly are as far as I am concerned; and from my heart I freely forgive, as I hope to be forgiven."

The answer to this letter could hardly have proved satisfactory, and the olive branch contained in it, if accepted at all, had not been accepted in the spirit in which it had been offered; for Patrick Dunbar wrote in a following, and evidently a last letter: "I wish it to be fully understood from this time forward that all relationship between us is at an end. I have not only repaid my debt to you, but I have humbled myself by making friendly advances which should have met with a different response from the one contained in your last letter. In saying this I am speaking more to your wife than to you; for I feel morally certain that she is, and always has been, the real stumbling block between us. She has a bad heart, or, rather, she has no heart at all; which is worse yet. She is a born mischief-maker; and at *her* door I lay the responsibility of this rupture between us, and of all the consequences arising from it in the future; for, once having come forward and offered you my hand in a spirit of mutual forgiveness, I shall never do so again."

"From the tone of this letter," Dunbar said to himself, "and from what I know of my uncle's character, it is as clear as the noonday sun what has happened; he has revoked his former will, and has made a new one cutting us off altogether from any succession to his estate; and who could blame him? I should have done exactly the same thing. And now it only remains to verify this very natural assumption, to have the new will brought to light, and—to

turn over all the wealth I and my family have lately enjoyed to the rightful heir."

Then it occurred to him that this could hardly be done, as matters stood, for the reason that a large portion of the estate had been dissipated in the purchase of houses and lands, in personal expenses of all kinds; and, in the losses he had incurred by the treachery of his friends. This thought gave him the greatest possible uneasiness. "This means not only poverty for me," he said, "it means bankruptcy, ruin and disgrace!"

He sat at his desk, his head resting on his hands, buried in thought. Suddenly he heard a light footstep in the passage, and then a light tap at the door. He rose from his seat went to the door and opening it found Helena standing before him. "May I come in?" she asked.

"Of course you may, my dear. I was on the point of coming to you. I have sorry news for you, Helena. I'm afraid you've not married a rich man, after all!"

"After all what, dear? Did I ever set out to marry a rich man? No, I set my cap, if you like, for the dearest and kindest man in the world; and I succeeded, thank God, in winning him. Riches had nothing whatever to do with it."

"Your saying that makes it much easier than it would otherwise be to tell you what has happened, my dear child. I have received information that leads me to believe that my uncle made another will setting aside the one under which I inherited his property. In which case, I am afraid I shall be not much better than a pauper, Helena. The strange part of it is that, except for you and our child, I seem to care so little about it. The thing that causes me anxiety is that I am afraid a large part of the estate can never be turned over to the rightful owner for the simple reason that it has been dissipated. I feel sure I can always support you and little Pads; but, to be heavily in debt, as

well as poor, is rather a hard case any way you look at it."

"I have some property which you know is at your disposal, my dear."

"Yes, Helena, but that must remain yours. I have no right nor wish to touch it; thanking you from the bottom of my heart, for all that."

"Well, dear old boy, cheer up. In the first place, your information may not be correct. In the second, there may be a dozen compensations about this affair which we little think of now."

"How do my mother and sisters take the news?"

"Well, they are pretty well upset, but they either do not or will not believe it possible for it to be true. Your mother overheard enough of the conversation between you and the bearer of the news, it appears, to thoroughly frighten her; but she fails to realize, I fear, what it means to lose a large fortune. I mean by that, how easy it is, sometimes, to lose one."

"A thing you *do* know, my poor child!"

"Ah, yes; but in *my* case I *won* so much more than I lost that it is not a fair comparison."

"Do you think then you could stand it to lose another one?"

"Most assuredly I could. As long as they can't take away from me my little and my big Pads; they may have the rest, and welcome."

"Well, my love, you put heart into me to face the ordeal, whatever it is. God bless you for it."

The dinner was by no means a cheerful feast that evening. Each and every member of the family seemed occupied with his or her thoughts, and little was said. Dunbar looked about him and silently contrasted all the evidences of wealth by which he was surrounded with the frugality of their former lives, and that which now the future held in store for them. It was a bitter pill to

swallow, but the bitterest part almost was the thought that his mother, who would undoubtedly be the one to feel the impending downfall of their fortunes most, was the very one who had been the cause of it, by reason of her tactless and heartless conduct. It would have been a difficult task for him to have forgiven her before this came to his knowledge; it would be well nigh impossible now.

Later in the evening Dunbar set out to keep the appointment asked for by Gow. It had been raining, and the fog was thick and heavy upon the town; but now the rain had changed to snow, and the searching cold of an English winter's night began to get into his very bones as he walked along. He had denied himself the comfort of a cab, as being now unsuited to his changed prospects in life. Between the fog and the snow, locomotion was difficult; and a drearier sight was scarcely to be imagined, from the standpoint of many a homeless wanderer he saw in the streets as he passed. At last he reached Trafalgar Square and the Strand, and was about to turn into Craven Street, intending to enter the hotel, when a shabbily dressed man whose face was concealed by a slouch hat suddenly loomed up out of the fog and approached him. "Would you spare a few coppers for a poor man, sir?" he said, holding out his hand; and then in a lower voice, "Don't recognize me, but lead the way to the foot of the street, and I'll follow you."

It was Gow; but Dunbar was only able to recognize him by his voice and manner. All semblance to the man he had once known was totally obliterated. Dunbar, as requested, now passed the Craven Hotel without stopping and followed the street to its lower end, where it nearly approaches the river. It is an out of the way place at any time, but on a foggy night it is as lonely as a churchyard. Here Gow quickened his pace and overtook his friend, saying: "This is no place for us to talk, Dunbar. There's a little eating house under Charing Cross Station just

round the corner, where we can sit down and you can pay for my supper, if you like, for I've had none. Follow me."

Gow now took the lead and turned into Villiers Street, from which to the street next to it towards the east there is a long vaulted passage directly under Charing Cross Station. Into this passage Gow now turned, Dunbar following. There was a chilly draught of air in the passage, and it was bitter cold; but Dunbar saw on either side of the long corridor poor fellows huddled up in all positions trying to snatch a few moments' sleep in a place where at least the snow could not get at them. He shuddered at the thought of what real poverty might mean. Here were men already at the bottom of the almost bottomless pit of human misery and despair. His own feet had, by the revelations that day had brought to light, been placed upon a lower rung in the ladder which led to these depths. How should he avoid taking the next lower, and the next, and the next, until he too should arrive at the bottom? It was a dreadful thought. The cold relentless wind blew in his face bearing the foul odors of damp clothing and the body stench of the miserable beings, who, possibly, were thanking God in their hearts that they had a shelter of *some* kind over their heads, poor as it was; and praying that they might not be disturbed in it. It appears to be the very last consolation left to suffering humanity, the thought that "it might be worse."

At last, leaving the passage, Gow led the way to one of the cheaper class of eating houses that are to be found under the arches of the Charing Cross Station, into which they entered, and Gow still leading the way, took seats at the extreme end of the room. Here Gow, with a sigh of genuine relief, sat down, shook the snow from his clothing, removed his hat, which he placed under his seat, and, for the first time gave Dunbar an opportunity to see his

face. He had allowed his beard to grow, and his face was thin and careworn. He had a hunted look about him, and Dunbar noticed that he had selected the seat which made it possible for him to watch the door leading into the street.

"It was good of you, Dunbar," Gow began, "to come out in such a night as this; but I couldn't come to you. You see, I'm followed—er, I mean since I've lost my money, I feel all the time as if I were followed. You see, in a business like mine one makes enemies. It's impossible to avoid it. And now, if you like, you may order a little supper and something to drink; for the story I've to tell is a rather long one, and—er, well, rather a dry one."

Gow smiled in a sickly way at his little pleasantry, as a poor relation might do at a rich man's table. All the old self assurance had left him long ago. It was pitiful, the change. Dunbar would have been in a better position to see both the pathos and the servility of it, had his mind not been disturbed by a presentiment of evil which it was impossible for him to shake off. He mechanically ordered supper, as Gow had requested, and then waited patiently for the waiter to retire and for his companion to begin his story. He had been curious to see how Gow would treat the little matter of the forgery, and was both pleased and amused that he had evidently determined to ignore it altogether. Dunbar having pocketed his loss saw nothing to be gained by bringing up the subject for discussion now, while much might be lost by either frightening or goading his treacherous friend into silence concerning a matter which was much more vital to him. So he quietly waited for Gow to take the edge off his appetite for both meat and drink. The poor fellow in truth went to work at the coarse viands with a gusto suggestive of a long fast. Finally, he settled back in his chair with

his eye, however, upon the unfinished repast, much as a hungry dog would watch a bone destined to provide a second meal, and began:

“Dunbar, you’ve always been a decent fellow, and, more than that, you’ve always been good to me. For this reason, I’m going to tell you a lot of things I have lately heard about your affairs just as I heard them. In fact, I’m going to treat you just as I should wish you to treat me, were our positions reversed. Some people would try to make capital out of the secret I have come in possession of. *I* am not one of that kind. Of course, I *am* needy at present, very needy; and, if, after you have heard my story, you feel the service I have rendered you is, well, worth something handsome, I shan’t refuse it, of course. I think I have it in my power to save you from a very serious danger.”

Here he looked at Dunbar, as if to see how his tactics were working, up to date; but Dunbar, if he were moved, certainly showed no outward indications of it. Gow went on:

“There is a man I have been dealing with, a very shrewd fellow, though not in our set at all, you understand, who in some way has got hold of another man recently returned from the States, who, while in the States ran against, in the most accidental manner possible, still a third man who is the undoubted heir of your uncle, the late Patrick Dunbar. Now, strange and improbable as this all may appear, and incredulous as you may be, there is an air of truth about the story which to me, at least, is most convincing. Upon the principle of selecting the less improbable of two theories, it would be much less difficult to believe the story as it comes to me, than to believe that the man who told it could by any possibility have invented it. You see, Dunbar, knowing as I do, a good deal about the will under which you inherited, I

am in a position to judge fairly well of the truth or falsity of the story I have heard; and, although it pains me on your account, I feel bound to tell you that I think it is a genuine case of a later will."

Gow then went on to repeat all the details he had gathered from Sharnell, many of which were new to Dunbar, some of which were not; but *all* of which served to fully establish the verities of his uncle's letters which he had so recently read. All that remained now, as far as he could see, was to have the actual will, the new one, produced, as a preliminary formality to his handing over the great fortune he had come into. He sat listening to what his former friend had to say much as a criminal in the dock would listen to the foreman of the jury announcing the verdict which was to cause him to end his days in a prison. The verdict was *against* him; and all that could be said of it was that it was not entirely unexpected.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"And now," said Gow, in coming to the end of his story, "What's to be done? Of course we don't propose to allow this young man to come into an estate of which he does not even know the existence. It will cost money, but it is worth it, it seems to me, to enable Sharnell to deal with the case; but he is just the man to do it. A sea-trip could be arranged for this young Mr. Dillon, or whatever his name is, for the good of his health, of course; but which would land him in a part of the world from which he would not be likely to return for a very long time."

"I shall be a party to no such proceedings, Gow; and you insult me by even suggesting them to me. Just so soon as this man proves to me that he is the true heir, just so soon shall I turn the estate over to him. Where is he to be found?"

"I don't know, I'm glad to say; for, not knowing, I can't tell you. Sharnell would tell me neither his address nor the name of the man who discovered him. They are both in London, and that's all I know about it."

"Well, Gow, you have my answer. In addition, you may tell your friend Sharnell, if you like, that I shall consider it a personal favor if he would put me in touch with the newly discovered heir with a view to having the matter settled and over with as speedily as possible. I hate suspense, and I should also hate to keep an honest

man out of his just dues for a single moment longer than it was necessary for him to prove his claim."

A look of profound disappointment not unmixed with contempt came over Gow's face as he heard Dunbar's answer. Here was his last chance slipping from him. It was a serious blow to him, situated as he was.

"Do I then understand you to mean what you say in rejecting our services, Sharnell's and mine, in saving you from this danger, Dunbar? Think of it well before you answer. It is no slight matter to give up such an inheritance as yours to an unknown stranger who is not even aware of his claim upon it, and is not seeking to know. I suppose you would be fool enough to go and tell him all about it if you knew where to find him?"

"I certainly should; and, more than that, if I could feel that I was not spending another man's money, I would offer you a larger sum to put me in communication with this newly discovered heir than I would to get him out of the way where he cannot communicate with me."

"Then you would admit his claim without a contest, and just ask him to come and strip you and your family of house and home, as if you were tired of them and wanted to get quit of them? You are mad, Dunbar. For God's sake, pull yourself together and put up the best fight you can. Once in the lawyers' hands, you could hold the estate for many a long year to come. The man might die in the meantime, or a dozen things might happen."

"I'm built upon different lines from you, Gow; and there's not the slightest chance of your changing me to your way of thinking; so don't waste your time in trying. You know my address. If you have anything to say to me write or wire me, and I will meet you if necessary; but *not* for any other purpose, mark you, than to assist in

putting this young man in possession of his own. And now, good-night."

Saying which, Dunbar, after paying the waiter, rose to take his departure. Gow was so taken aback by this sudden and uncompromising action of his friend, that he forgot even to ask him for a few sovereigns to go on with; an omission which caused him the greatest possible remorse after it was too late to remedy it. After Dunbar had gone, Gow lighted his pipe and sat awhile ruminating. "A pretty mess I've made of this affair, so far," he said to himself. 'And now what's to be done Sharnell will be furious, and will be for breaking with me altogether; and I can't blame him if he does. There must be some way of managing this affair. If money can't be had out of this fool Dunbar, it must be had out of the other fellow; that's all."

Consoling himself with this and other reflections, Gow sat smoking his pipe until warned by the proprietor of the place that it was time to close for the night, and then he rose, knocked the ashes from his pipe, put on his hat, pulling it well down over his eyes, and finally sallied forth in the snow storm.

Dunbar, partly from curiosity, and partly from a fellow-feeling for the poor fellows he had seen lying about in the passage under the station, re-entered it on his way home instead of following the street he was upon to the Strand. He found the men just as he had left them, some half reclining, some lying prostrate upon the damp pavement of the place, some partly covered with old newspapers to keep out the cold; but all miserable to a degree which would move the hardest heart. Not being able to do for all, he selected one whom he saw to be awake and shivering with the cold, and bending over him he slipped a few silver pieces into his hand, at the same time in a kindly voice advising him to try and find a more hospitable shelter for

the remainder of the night. Then, bitterly regretting that he could not do as well for *all* the poor wretches he saw about, he passed along and out into Villiers Street. He had proceeded only a short distance when he heard someone approaching him from behind. He turned and saw it was the man to whom he had given the money in the passage. He stopped to allow the man to overtake him. "You have made a mistake, sir, I'm afraid," he said, holding out his hand with the silver pieces in it. "You have given me several half crowns mistaking them for pennies, I suppose."

Dunbar looked at the poor fellow in astonishment. Here was a man in as evil a case as a human creature could well be in and still live; cold, hungry, poorly clad, a homeless wanderer of the streets of a great city, but still not only honest, but in the finest sense a gentleman. "So far from making a mistake, my friend," he said, "my only regret was and is that I cannot do more for you. Keep your money, and may God send you better fortunes!"

The man's answer was to come nearer, and, taking Dunbar's hand in both his own to kiss it reverently, as if it had been a saint's; and, as Dunbar passed along, the words, "May God bless you!" reached his ear. Arrived at his home, our hero let himself in with his slip-key. The household had retired for the night, and the place was as silent as a tomb. He found his wife and child peacefully sleeping, and he kissed them gently without awakening them. For hours that night he lay awake thinking how little in reality his present position differed from that of the starving, shivering wretches he had seen sleeping in the street. To be sure, for the time being there were thick brick and stone walls between him and the wintry blasts, there was warmth and comfort and sympathy and love; but what was it that held those walls together, that kept the roof over his head, that warmed him, fed him, clothed him,

that even in a large measure created the love of his family, the respect of his servants, the friendship of his friends? Humiliating as it was, the answer to his question was "money." The few shillings he had given the homeless wanderer of the street had made all the difference between perhaps his freezing to death, and of passing the night in a comfortable bed. In a few days or weeks or months, *he* might be looking backward upon his present luxurious surroundings as hopelessly as if they had never existed. So much does the possession of money stand for in this world of ours, say what you will!

At breakfast the next morning, Dunbar announced to his family the changed condition of their fortunes. As he expected to be, he was assailed by everyone but his wife by protests such as Gow had uttered the evening before.

"I never heard of such an absurd proceeding in my life," his mother said, angrily. "The audacity of some adventurer from the land of adventurers coming here to drive a highly respectable family like ours from their ancestral home. Some of these Yankees will come over and try to dispossess the Queen from Buckingham Palace or Windsor, one of these days! I, for one, will never be turned out into the streets to starve by people I despise as I do these low-born creatures, even if you, Pads, *do* think so much of them. I will never yield an inch to them, never, never!"

"And yet our 'ancestral home' as you are pleased to call it, came from these very Yankees you despise," said Dunbar, looking at his wife to see how she was bearing up under the attack upon her country people.

"And, for that reason, you, I suppose, will be perfectly satisfied to allow the first one of these—well, Americans, that comes along, to take our home from us and make us beggars. I am really ashamed of you, Pads; ashamed that

a son of mine with British blood in his veins should offer to surrender to the enemy even before he is attacked."

"And yet you highly approved of the Murphys surrendering without a fight, when the positions were reversed, and we were the attacking party and they were behind the entrenchments."

"That was a different case altogether," said Mrs. Dunbar, contemptuously. "These people are not sure of their rights, as you say yourself; whereas we *were* sure of ours."

"The Murphys could have given us years of waiting and no end of trouble and expense before ever we had established a claim which as it turns out is not a tenable one, after all; but they nobly and generously saved us all this; and *this* is the thanks they get for it! As far as I am concerned, and I am glad to say Helena thinks as I do, we shall try to be as honorable and as honest as she and her mother were. My chief regret is, that once having made such a sacrifice, the poor child should be called upon to make *another*."

"You must do as you please, Pads; but I give you warning that your sisters and I will make the bitterest and longest fight we can before ever we give up one penny of *our* interest in the estate. My own pride and my love for my children will not admit of my doing otherwise. We shall engage the best legal talent we can find, and nothing you can say will change our purpose. To think of a gentlewoman in my position and at my time of life being turned out into the streets. Its preposterous; and you are unworthy the name you inherited to put up with it for an instant!"

Dunbar saw that there was nothing to be gained by a further discussion of the matter; but, having relieved his mind of the responsibility of giving his family at large due notice of the impending danger, set himself to work to prepare his particular branch of it for a crisis

which he now felt he had every reason to regard as inevitable. Not deeming it expedient to make any very visible reduction in their style of living until the expected event had developed beyond its present stage, he confined his efforts to finding employment which would support his family after its arrival. As there are always not only positions but many other good things in the world going a begging for persons who are supposed not to want them, he easily found what he was looking for. In fact he only had to intimate to his former employer in the city that he would like a place, when one was made for him directly. This provided him with an income of three hundred pounds; upon which he knew he could hardly starve. Then he and Helena together looked about for a small house in the suburbs, suited to a family of limited means, and having found one in Wandsworth, Dunbar rented it and furnished it in the simplest manner possible but quite suitably to their wants. His wife being thoroughly in sympathy with the movement, now joined him in cutting down their share of the expenses of the household to the minimum; and, in a word, they placed themselves in marching order to move directly upon hearing the word of command. His mother and sisters, on the contrary, took no more notice of the warning of trouble ahead than to grumble at the insolence of the whole Yankee nation, and more particularly that portion of it which had evidently been brought into the world by the Almighty for the express purpose of annoying them. In fact, they seemed to take a malicious delight in shocking Dunbar and his wife by their senseless and unnecessary expenditure of money. Adding all this to the already strained relations of the family, the home life of the Dunbars was far from pleasant; and our hero and his wife anticipated almost with pleasure, rather than the reverse, the day when the crash should come and be over with.

The evening of the day after his interview with Dunbar, Gow prepared himself for the ordeal of a visit from Sharnell; which he well knew could hardly fail of being a disagreeable one. The latter arrived shortly after nightfall, and was immediately admitted and shown to Gow's room; after which service his landlady, true to her promise, slipped across the street to notify Mrs. Marley. In a few moments, as a result of this manoeuvre, that lady was safely ensconced in a place where she could easily overhear all that was said in Gow's room, although she could not see the speakers.

"And so Dunbar turned us down, did he?" said Sharnell.

"Yes, and not only that, but gave us a pretty good piece of his mind for having the cheek to approach him with any proposition of the kind I made him."

"Um, and you think he meant it?"

"Knowing the man as I do, I have no doubt about it."

"He's a good deal of a damned fool, I should say. How does it strike you?"

"I'm of your opinion, and I frankly told him so; but what good did *that* do? Money's what we're after, and no money will we get from Dunbar. He's as stubborn as a mule, and he thinks that because the estate was handed over to him without a struggle, it's his duty to hand it over to the first man who comes along to claim it. It will become a regular football in time, this Dunbar estate. And now what's to be done?"

"Before we go into that question, I want to ask you whether or no there could not be some way devised by which Dunbar could be induced to change his mind? Did you dwell sufficiently, do you think, upon the strong points of the case; the fact, for instance, that this young man, this Dillon, doesn't even know that he is the heir? Hello, what's that?"

The latter inquiry was occasioned by a slight sound, proceeding from a closet, as if a person had stirred. Gow immediately went to the place and carefully inspected it, but found nothing to arouse any suspicion that a listener was about.

"Nothing much, I should say," he said, evidently satisfied. "Possibly my landlady messing about in the next room. She couldn't have much object in listening to what we have to say; and she's rather deaf, into the bargain, judging from the manner in which she often fails to respond to my requests. And now to answer your last question: Dunbar is absolutely of no good to us. In fact, the more I put the matter to him in the light you and I both see it in, the angrier he got. He considers himself a sort of trustee, a *locum tenens* for the newly discovered heir; and says he would, if the money was his, give more to the man who would introduce him to the man who is ready to rob him of his estate, than to the one who would be instrumental in sending him on a trip to the South Sea Islands, for instance, or to Kingdom come. There's nothing to be done with him, and it's a complete waste of time to try. Now, having got as far as *this*, what's your idea as to our next move? One thing is sure; and that is, this chance must not be allowed to slip through our fingers. I, for one, am far too near the workhouse for that."

"Well, then, matters being as you state them, although I can't imagine how a man of your fertility of resource could make such a poor fist of a job as you have made of this, I will go a little farther than I went the last time I saw you and tell you certain things; but only on one condition, and that is that you are to thoroughly understand that as sure as my name is what it is, I will follow you to the ends of the earth until I kill you, if you in any way betray my confidence or take advantage of it to your own profit, exclusive of me. I have discovered this plant, and

by God, I'll have my corner, my share of the spoils, or I'll make the man who robs me of it wish he'd never been born. Do you fully appreciate this? There's no earthly good in making you swear, or even promise fidelity, because nothing but fear can influence such a white-livered scoundrel as you. So let's get to business."

"That's what I'm waiting for," responded Gow, moodily. "All this theatrical talk of yours doesn't count for much, Sharnell; for, in the first place, no one wants to rob you of your share of either the profit or the credit of this affair; and, in the second, I couldn't, if I were so disposed. So let's get on."

"Well, I refused to tell you the name of the man who discovered Dillon, the other evening, and also to tell you where both of them were to be found in London. I shall now, in carrying out the alternative plan I have in view, Dunbar having failed us, be compelled either to trust you with my full confidence, or to withdraw it, and manage the matter myself. So I have decided upon trusting you; not because I want to, but because to get another man into the game just now would only be to spread the knowledge of a matter which has gone already too far. So, here goes: The man who discovered Dillon, the true heir to the Dunbar estate, in the States is none other than our old friend Dobson; and they, he and young Dillon, are both staying at the Manchester Hotel, Aldersgate. Dobson is there under the name of 'Ferguson'; and now you know as much as I do."

Here followed a somewhat prolonged pause in the conversation, as if the speaker was allowing his listener time in which to overcome the astonishment incident to a startling announcement, and to readjust his faculties to a new condition of affairs. At last Gow said: "You are sure of this, Sharnell? It seems to me a hardly credible piece of news that Dobson should return to London, as matters

stand between him and Dunbar. Have you actually seen him, or do you get this report on hearsay?"

"You fool, did you ever know Orlando Sharnell to make a statement when important interests were at stake that he couldn't back up? I've seen the man, I tell you, and have had a long interview with him. *You* can see him, if you like, by strolling into his hotel; only I advise you not to go there from mere curiosity, or until you have come to a definite understanding as to the best course to pursue. Dobson, like yourself, is just now under a very heavy cloud and is suspicious. If he were to see a bird of ill omen like you hanging about, he might take flight; and, if he did, you can mark my words, he wouldn't leave his young American friend behind him to fall into the hands of the Philistines; no fear."

"And so you say this young Dillon, or whatever is his name, doesn't even know of his being the heir to the Dunbar estate."

"No; according to Dobson, the young man was adopted in early life by Dunbar senior, and has already come into all of his estate he knows to exist. He is in London, so Dobson says, for the purpose of looking up some lost relative, a sister, I believe. Now, what we want to do, as far as I can see, is to either frighten Dobson out of London, arranging matters in such a manner as to have him leave Dillon behind him; or, if this turns out to be impracticable, to get Dillon away from him in some way. Once we have Dillon under our control and away from Dobson, we can breathe freely. We can then either wait for Dunbar to come round to our way of thinking, or we can withhold the knowledge of his good fortune from Dillon until we have in some way managed to make a bargain with him by which we shall be well paid for our trouble when we see fit to enable him to take possession of his estate. How does this plan strike you?"

"It's all right, if it can be carried out; but can it? Unless you took actual physical possession of this young man, and forcibly imprisoned him, all of which is a rather large contract, to say nothing of the danger attaching to it, how are we to keep him under our control, once we get him there?"

"All that's true enough; but something's got to be done, or we lose the opportunity of our lives. The question is, is it worth the risk? and I've made up my mind it is. We could catch this wild young American eagle easily enough, if we only knew what to do with him after he was caught. I should like to avoid using force, naturally; but, by God, Gow, if we have to even make away with this chap, it shan't stand as an obstacle to my getting my share of all that's coming to the man who can handle this affair successfully. Now, what do *you* say?"

"I confess I don't like the idea of employing force, Sharnell, as I'm in trouble enough already and I don't want any more. Let me see, why wouldn't it be a good plan to lure this young chap into a place where we could talk matters over with him, and then in some way manage to convince him that Dobson is not the man at all for him to tie up to?"

"The very thing," cried Sharnell, excitedly, "we could point out to him that Dobson, being afraid of the police, is in no position to look after his interests, as he cannot move about London freely; and for other reasons. By George, I've got it! We'll tell him we'll find his sister for him if he'll put himself under our charge. The very thing. Why didn't we think of that before? Then, in addition to this, after we once get possession of the young fool, we can frighten Dobson into going over to Paris, or somewhere else, until the danger is over. In the meantime we'll make a bargain with Dillon, or, by God, we'll know the reason why."

"Well, I don't see why this isn't the way out of the difficulty, Sharnell; and now, how to get the young man's ear; and if we persuade him to come with us, where shall we keep him until all danger of Dobson's retaking him from us is past?"

"It's easy enough to have a talk with him, for I have his description and I can easily send a man to him whom I can trust to do the talking. The real trouble is to find a place in which to keep him; a safe place."

"Why not take him to your own house?"

"No, I couldn't do that for many reasons. I have it, why not bring him here to *this* house? *You* could take care of him and keep him from wandering about too much, for the reason that *you* can't wander very much yourself, except after dark. Why isn't this a good idea?"

Gow didn't answer for a moment. Finally he said: "I was thinking it all over and I don't see why that couldn't be done. There is a room on this floor adjoining mine. It's not much of a room, or house, or quarter of the town for a swell to live in, to be sure; but we can tell him it's perhaps the likeliest place to find a lost relative in; and I'm blowed if I don't think it really is. Most lost people in London drift sooner or later into the east end, You know that as well as I do."

"Not at all a bad idea; Gow, and by George, we'll carry it out. Only, remember, at the least sign of treachery on your part, I'll kill you as I would a dog. Kill you, or give you up to the police, either one or the other; so don't try to play any tricks with me."

"If you have any fears of tricks, Sharnell, don't have anything to do with the plan. Manage it yourself, and take all the spoils. I can't prevent you. It's your scheme, not mine. But, if you *do* enter into the plan, for God's sake, give over this big talk of what you'll do. It's unworthy of business men like us."

With this, and an arrangement between them for another meeting, together with an understanding that Gow should secure the room adjoining his own for Dillon's occupancy, the meeting adjourned; and Sharnell took his departure.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Well, and how do you like London?" asked Dobson of young Dillon. They were sitting in the coffee room of the Manchester Hotel before a snug coal fire imbibing the regulation Scotch and water, and pulling away at the equally orthodox pipe.

"If I could *see* London, I think I should be interested, and might in time learn to like the place; but I've been here some two weeks and I haven't begun to see it yet," replied Dillon.

"Yes, it's been a little foggy, I admit; but we haven't had a genuine *black* fog yet. Wait till you see a black'un, before you say much about fogs."

"That's what they all say, and I suppose I shall have to wait; but how are matters going on, Mr. Ferguson; isn't it about time for us to get about the business that brought us to London?"

Ferguson's or Dobson's answer was preceded by a contemptuous look, as if to say, "well, you are young, to be sure!" but he went on aloud:

"My young friend, you said just now that you have not yet seen London; which is perfectly true. You *haven't* seen it. When you have seen it, you will begin to realize what a vast place it is, and how very small an atom one single human being is amongst the millions of people about. Then again, there is a way to go to work in every kind of business which is the *proper* way, while all others are the *improper* ones. Just look out into that street. It

is broad daylight, but you can hardly distinguish the form of a man half a dozen paces off, let alone recognizing him. What kind of a chance would you have, I ask you, of ever finding a person you were looking for in such a labyrinth of streets as you find in London, crowded as they are with human beings, transient and resident, and *all* enveloped in such a pall as that fog? When it gets so thick that long-shoremen, accustomed for years to their surroundings, actually walk off the wharves into the river, and cab horses find themselves in areas, and never know how they came there, why you could call *that* a fog."

"Yes, I've heard about 'em ever since I've been in London; but I'm naturally, I suppose, anxious about my sister. The more I see of London, the more I appreciate the horror, the helplessness of a person's being poor in the place. What should I, strong, young fellow that I am, do in that foggy street, penniless? It would be much worse for a woman delicately nurtured as my sister has been. I somehow feel degraded in sitting here by a comfortable fire, with every want supplied, when I think that that poor girl may be suffering from want and loneliness in such a place as this."

"Yes, I agree with you; but what can be done to hasten matters? One of the most adroit men for such a job in London is doing the preliminary work necessary for ultimate success. If you would feel any better for going out to assist him in his work, by all means do so; but, let me warn you that we are very near the east end here in this hotel, and the east end abounds in very dangerous places and people, as you may have heard. In such a fog as this, a person unfamiliar with London, might be easily decoyed into some dark alleyway, robbed, killed and his body thrown into the river, before ever he knew where he was. So, take my word for it that all is being done that can be done, and let well enough alone!"

Saying which, Mr. Dobson clinched his warning by giving his young friend rather a stern look, took a sip of whisky and water, and began to read his edition of the *Evening Globe*. The afternoon wore on, and Dillon, left to himself, became more and more restless and uncomfortable. In the first place, the fog which had all day been several degrees heavier than any he had seen since his arrival in London, now began to thicken up very perceptibly, until, as six o'clock came round, when some millions of housewives begin to mend their fires to prepare the evening meal, it became so opaque as to fully justify anything Dillon had heard said about it. He dined with his friend Dobson in the coffee room at about half-past six, and after dinner before settling down before the soft coal fire for a smoke, took a look out into the street. It was now so dark and so thick that a man could hardly see his hand before his face. The street lights themselves could only be seen a few feet away, and then looked like dull, luminous balls trying to face their way through a blackness too intense to be described. All street traffic had practically come to an end. A few cabs were to be seen when directly upon you, but the drivers, instead of *driving*, were leading their horses. A number of enterprising small boys about had improvised torches of several kinds, and were doing an active business in offering to escort timid old ladies and feeble old men to places of safety. Added to the intense gloom, it was bitterly cold. Taken for all and all, it was a revelation to young Dillon, as he stood in the doorway of his hotel and looked out upon the scene. "What a night," he said to himself, "to be about in, in any case; but without money, or friends, or a roof over your head; could anything be more pitiable?"

He returned to the coffee room; more from force of habit than from choice, ordered some whisky and water, lighted his pipe, and settled himself into a chair. Dobson

had already made his arrangements for the evening, and with his newspaper over his face, a half emptied glass on the table at his side, was taking an after-dinner-nap, as was his wont. There were no other guests in the room, and, if there had been, it is doubtful whether the etiquette of the coffee room would have permitted any intercourse between them; all that kind of thing being reserved for the less aristocratic but far more cheerful Commercial room, in the old-fashioned English hotels. The combined result of all these conditions was to make Dillon still more uneasy. He frequently rose from his chair and looked out into the street to see how the fog was progressing. It seemed to possess a weird fascination for him, although at the same time to suggest a feeling of doubt and dread, as if he heard a familiar voice calling to him from out its mysterious depths for help.

"By George," he said to himself, "I wonder what it would feel like to be lost in the streets of London on such a night as this!"

He took a look at his sleeping companion, as if hesitating to waken him. It is perhaps superfluous to say that, owing to the difference in their ages and the relationship which existed between them, Dillon rather stood in awe of Dobson. In fact, Dobson had intended it should be so from the first. Dillon was just now possessed with an almost uncontrollable desire to go out alone into the wilderness of streets he knew to exist about him in search of a new sensation, perhaps, or in response to the call he had heard ringing in his ears. At last, seeing no immediate probability of his friend's awakening, he took an envelope from the writing table and writing upon it: "Feeling rather restless, gone for a walk." he laid it on the table near Dobson in such a position as to insure its being seen upon his return from the land of dreams, and left the room. Then, going to his sleeping apartment, he put on a rough

pea-jacket, drew a slouch hat over his head, took a stout stick in his hand, descended the stairs, passed through the door of the hotel, and in a moment was on the street and lost in the fog. Which way he went will probably never be known. Being absolutely unacquainted with the streets of London, one way answered his purpose quite as well as another. One thing, however, was certain, and that was that he had not proceeded a hundred paces from his hotel before he was so completely lost, relatively to his ability to find his way back again, as if he had been drifting about among the islands of the South Sea upon a raft. After turning the first corner, he became so hopelessly confused and had so absolutely lost his bearings as to make it a matter of indifference which way he went; he was lost anyway. One never fully appreciates how much we unconsciously depend upon land marks in our daily walks until we lose them. If Dillon had suddenly been stricken with blindness, he could not have been more helpless than he was. All traces of buildings had disappeared, street lamps could only be distinguished when he almost ran into them, and he actually did run into several people, from his sheer inability to see them. It might have been described as a darkness, intense in itself, hung about with an impenetrable pall of blackness still more intense.

Still, as Dillon had anticipated, there was a certain fascination about it all. It was an absolutely new and untried experience to him, for one thing; and that in itself always possesses a charm for youth. Then again, somehow he now felt a sense of self-gratulation that comes to a man when, if it is impossible to help his friend in distress, he as nearly as possible places himself in a similar position. He knows how it feels himself, and that keeps his sympathies alert. So Dillon went on and on, turning out of one street and into another, entirely without either purpose or direction, and never for a moment stopping to

think how he could ever retrace his steps. Young and strong as he was, it was a delight to be able to stretch out his legs and swing his arms; to go as he pleased, without any reference to Dobson, who had of late, from motives of his own, become such a drag upon his movements as to annoy him excessively. Not only to annoy, either, for, for reasons he could hardly explain even to himself, he had begun to be a little suspicious of the man. Dobson had never been frank and open with him, had never appeared to sympathize with him in his anxiety for his sister; and, of late, had begun to be very exacting in his demands for money. Now Dillon was willing enough to part with his money while he felt he was in doing so getting nearer to the object of his search; but, to feel that possibly he was only filling the pockets of his friend Dobson now quietly sleeping before the fire at the hotel was by no means a reassuring reflection, from any point of view. But, what could he do? He had placed his affairs in the hands of this man. He knew of no other better fitted for the purpose. It had seemed very easy to trust Dobson in the wilds of an American mining town, where now in London it appeared very difficult to do so. Dillon had matured greatly since his first meeting with Dobson, and now his short life in London had still further opened his eyes. Everyone in London seemed so distrustful of his neighbor, so inclined to look upon the hard, selfish side of human nature, that he found himself insensibly beginning to do the same thing. He distrusted Dobson, at any rate, and would have been glad to shake him off; but he knew not how. Then the vastness of London appalled him. How should he ever hope to find his sister in such a place unaided, if, while aided he had so far made so little progress?

With such reflections crowding upon his mind Dillon pressed on, now so hopelessly lost as to be indifferent to it. Still, as everything has an end, there came a time when

he suddenly reflected that, unless he had been going round in a circle ever since he left his hotel, he must now be a long way from it. It was now rather late in the evening, and the fog had sensibly lifted, although by no means disappeared. It was possible, however, to make out the outlines of the buildings to a certain degree, and to judge of the character of the streets he was passing through. He could also distinguish human figures with some distinctness when in the vicinity of a street lamp. Just as he was beginning to feel a little uneasiness as to the best method of finding his way home, a policeman approached him from behind, and, as he came abreast of him, asked, in the respectful manner that characterizes the London police officer: "Beg pardon, sir, but do you know where you're going? There were two rather hard lookin' men followin' you until I got my eye on 'em; but, as soon as I take it off they'll be on your track again, knowin' that I can't leave my beat. Now, sir, if you'll tell me where you want to go, I'll try to set you on your way; but don't go the way you're goin' now, for in five minutes, if you do, you'll be in the worst part of London, a place where even the police don't much care to go except in considerable force."

"You are very kind, officer," replied Dillon. "The fact is, I'm afraid I've lost my way. I'm a stranger in London, and I thought I'd like to take a walk in the fog; but I see now I have bitten off rather more than I can chew. I should be much obliged to you if you would show me the way out of the network of streets that don't seem to lead anywhere, and into some thoroughfare from which I can get a start in the right direction, or find a cab to take me home."

"Just what I thought, sir, I could see you were a stranger. A man who knows London would never venture alone into *this* part of it after nightfall. It's as much as one's life is worth. This way, sir, if you please."

And at that the officer led the way through a number of squalid streets, until the lights of a large and well-lighted thoroughfare appeared in sight. "There," said the man, "is Commercial Road; and you can take a bus or a cab to almost anywhere you wish to go. Good-night sir."

And the policeman, touching his hat, was about to leave him. Dillon called him back, saying: "You've been very good to me, officer, and it's a very cold night. Do you happen to know of a quiet place about here where we could get a drop of whisky? I don't think it would hurt either of us, do you?"

"No, sir; but I've got my service stripe on, sir; I'm afraid it wouldn't answer."

"Just take off your service stripe, then," said Dillon, and lead on to the first place where we can find something to drink."

The officer seemed to think this invitation was one worth availing of, and soon they were standing in front of a small private bar in a public house on Commercial Road. They had their drink, and then Dillon slipped a half-sovereign into the policeman's hand, thereby securing his friendship for life, and they were about leaving the place, when in the next compartment to the one in which they were standing Dillon distinctly heard his own name mentioned. Two men were evidently having a drink, and one of them said to the other: "I've arranged for the room, right enough, but the thing will be to get this Dillon, or whatever's his name to come to it."

"Leave that to me," said the other voice.

As there are a good many Dillons in the world, hearing one of them alluded to did not particularly impress our young friend; and now he and the officer stepped out into the street. There were a number of men and women standing about the entrance to the public house, as unfortunately there always are in the poorer quarters of London. "And

now," said the policeman, respectfully, "if you will tell me, sir, about where you want to go, I'll set you on your way."

"I want to get to the Manchester Hotel, in Aldersgate," said Dillon.

"Ah, that's a longish walk from 'ere, sir; and perhaps you had better take a cab. But, if you *do* walk, why turn to the right, go straight on through Commercial Road to Aldgate, through Aldgate to Leadenhall Street, Leadenhall Street to Cornhill, Cornhill to the Bank. Then turn into Cheapside until you come to the General Post Office, then turn up St. Martin's Lane, to Aldersgate, and you'll find your Hotel on the left-hand side of the way, sir; but it's a pretty long walk."

"Well, I'm out for a walk," said Dillon, "and so I'll be off; and thank you again. By the way, officer, when you're off duty, and can spare the time, drop into the Manchester and we'll have a drop of whisky, and I'll tell you some stories of American mining life. Ask for Dillon, Patrick Dillon. And now, good-night."

"I'll be glad to do so, sir, and thank you kindly," replied the officer, and then they parted, Dillon proceeding up the Commercial Road towards the City, the officer returning to his beat. Hardly had Dillon turned his back upon the place, than a woman, veiled, and evidently of the better class of street women, left the place near the door of the public house where she had been standing during the conversation between the officer and Dillon, and followed him. The latter, feeling that it was getting late, and bearing in mind the officer's statement that he had rather a long walk before him, now broke into a rapid pace, which the woman following him seemed to find it impossible to keep up. At any rate, choosing a part of the street where there were no listeners, she suddenly came up to Dillon from behind, and said: "I beg your pardon, sir, but I'd like a word with you, if you please. Don't notice me here,

but go on to the corner of the next street and I'll join you."

Dillon did as requested, and turning into the next street, where it was dark and sheltered from intrusion, waited for the woman to come up.

"I heard your name and address as you gave them to the officer. Don't ask who I am. Don't ask me anything. I prefer at present to remain unknown. You are in London looking for a lost relative. I can help you; but you must follow my directions implicitly. To-morrow, in the afternoon, the gentleman whom you call your friend, but who is really no friend, will have an engagement, and leave you for an hour or two. During his absence, a man will call upon you, and suggest to you to take a lodging in Cutter Street, at the house of a Mrs. Macklin. Go with him; but say nothing to your friend, Mr. Ferguson. That is, leave no address by which he can trace you to your new lodgings. I will see you there, and explain all. In the meantime, good-night. Don't ask me anything, and don't follow me. Do as I say, that is if you really wish to find your sis—your lost relative."

Before Dillon could recover from the surprise of this adventure, the woman was a hundred paces away from him, walking rapidly, as if desirous of not being followed. The young man hesitated a moment, as undecided whether to follow the directions given him and refrain from following the mysterious woman, and then, recalling to his mind the fact of his having been rescued by what appeared to be the merest chance from one misadventure that evening, it would be as well not to tempt Providence a second time, turned his face again to the west, and started off at a rapid pace to return to his Hotel. He found it with less difficulty than he expected, and also found Dobson waiting for him in no very amiable frame of mind. "And so you *would* go for a walk, would you, when I ad-

vised you against it? Well, boys will be boys, I suppose; but let me tell you, you have done well to return alive, for we've come as near having a black fog to-night as I have ever seen it, without actually having one. It's cleared a little now, but it was bad enough early in the evening. Well, have you had any adventures? You didn't find your sister, did you?"

It suddenly and for the first time flashed upon Dillon's mind that the woman he had met *might* have been his sister; but for reasons of his own he preferred to keep his reflections to himself. "No," he answered, carelessly, "but I found out a good deal about London I didn't know before; one thing in particular, that you have a capital Police force here. An officer saw me getting into a bad part of the town, and promptly came to my aid and showed me the way to a wide thoroughfare, and sent me on my way home as straight as an arrow."

"And do you happen to know what thoroughfare it was?"

"Yes, the Commercial Road."

"Good God, you didn't get as far as *that* away from home, did you? It's a wonder you ever got back."

"Yes, and I must have reached it by a round-about way, and through as bad a lot of streets as any in London, from what the officer told me."

"So, you stopped to talk with the man, did you?"

"Oh, yes, I did more than that; I asked him to have a drink and we had rather a long chat. I asked him to come and see me here when he was off duty."

"You asked him to come and see you, a policeman?" asked Dobson, in an excited and angry voice. "Well, it does seem as if you had taken leave of your senses, Dillon."

"Why?"

"Why? Why, we don't invite policemen to come and see

us in England. They're not supposed to be upon a social equality with, um, gentlemen."

"Probably your and my definitions of the word gentleman would not agree, Mr. Ferguson. A gentleman in my country is the man who does gentle things; and is not necessarily gentle by birth. I shall be very glad to see my friend of this evening's adventure again, for he proved himself a real friend to me, if half what both you and he say about the dangers of the east end of London on a foggy night are true."

"And *I* shall be particularly *displeased* to see him," responded Dobson, with an oath. "So don't have him about when I'm with you."

"Very well, Mr. Ferguson; I won't, if I can help it."

"Um, you *must* help it, I tell you; I will not have you bringing policemen to *my* hotel. Your American ways of doing things won't go down here at all, at all; Mr. Dillon. The idea of making a friend of a policeman; who ever heard of such a thing? By the way, I forgot to tell you, I've an appointment with my agent who is looking into your matters for two o'clock to-morrow afternoon. Do you think you can keep yourself out of mischief for an hour or two if left to yourself? Perhaps your policeman will look you up at that time. At any rate, I must leave you alone for a while."

"Very well, Mr. Ferguson. I'll do my best to behave myself."

And so the men parted for the night. Dillon slept but little, feeling, without being able to account for it, as if he were upon the edge of a discovery. The following day, Dobson appeared ugly and taciturn; as if, having reflected upon the ways of his young client over night, he had come to decidedly disapprove of them. Dillon, on his part, had come to more than ever distrust his mentor, and had fully made up his mind to give him the slip as

soon as an opportunity offered. Such was the position of affairs, when, true to his word, Dobson left the Hotel to keep his appointment with Sharnell at the public house in the Commercial Road, as agreed upon at their last meeting. He left Dillon to himself with evident uneasiness and reluctance; but there being no alternative, it had to be done. So he consoled himself by asking Dillon for an advance of twenty pounds, which was promptly paid him, and then set out to keep his appointment.

The young man took a seat by the coffee room fire, ordered a drop of whisky and water, lighted his pipe, and quietly awaited events. In about half an hour, as if the party had allowed sufficient time to elapse to insure against a possible return of Dobson, the waiter came to Dillon and respectfully informed him that a man particularly wished to see him in the hall of the hotel, who declined to give his name, but said his business was important. Dillon immediately went to the man. "Did you wish to speak to me?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, but not just here, if you don't mind. Just outside. We can talk without bein' over'eard."

They went out onto the street, and then the man began: "I come from an unknown friend of yours, sir, to tell you you're wastin' your time the way you're goin' to work about the business that brought you to London. More than that, the party you're with is a regular bad un; no good at all. E'll throw you, 'e will. Now, sir, if you really want to find your relative, I'll put you next to the man who'll find her for you; but you must come with me. I'll see you're put up just as comfortable as you are here. Not as stylish, it may be; but, what do you care for that?"

After a short conversation, in which the man fully revealed himself as the party the woman said would call upon him, Dillon accepted the man's invitation. He returned to the hotel, paid his bill, left a line for Dobson

saying he had somewhat changed his plans and had taken lodgings, although not giving his new address; but said he would communicate with him when occasion offered. Then he had his luggage placed on a four-wheeler, and with his newly found friend on the box to direct the driver, drove away in the fog to his new quarters.

CHAPTER XX.

The first effect of the astounding revelation which had come to her as the result of overhearing the conversation between Gow and his friend Sharnell was to throw Mrs. Marley into a profound melancholy; the second, to place her on the horns of a very serious dilemma. Of course the reader has come to know by this time that Catherine Marley was none other than Catherine or Kate Dillon, the sister of Patrick Dillon. By the same token, he has also come to suspect the painful nature of the story of her relations with Gow; the old story of woman's faith in man; the most sacred of all things in life turned to the basest uses. So far, so good; but, in dealing with an individual case, all sorts of allowances have to be made for personal peculiarities in either judging of the ethics of what the party in question *has* done, or in prognosticating what he or she *will* do. Kate Dillon, as we shall call her from this time on, was a peculiar type of woman. Her early life was responsible for this. Born in a rough mining camp, of ordinary parentage, accustomed from infancy to scenes of violence, privations, the very hardest kind of fare, she had undoubtedly imbibed unconsciously a familiarity with the coarser, the more animal side of human nature, together with an independence of spirit, and a strength of character, which her subsequent education might easily have failed to eradicate. The real foundations of character date back to the earliest experiences and environments of life; and are no more to be rooted

up than the *foundations* of anything in either the physical or spiritual worlds are to be rooted up. Then came her adoption, with her brother, by Patrick Dunbar, a moody but kindly man, whose influence upon her had probably been good in its way, but perhaps not all that could have been desired for a young girl whose destiny was so greatly to be changed by it. There came a time when Kate was to be thrown upon her own resources with no more knowledge or experience of the real world than such an early life as her's had presupposed. However strong a character may be under conditions with which it has been familiar from early childhood, remove those conditions, replace them with others and essentially different ones, and you place upon the character a strain far exceeding that to which it would have been subjected if left to mature where it began. It had certainly proved to be so in the case of Kate Dillon. She would have protected herself, probably with ease, from either the wild beast, the bad men, or the other dangers, whatever they might have been, of the rough country in which she had been born, where she was unable to do so in a country where all the land-marks, the danger signals which she had come to understand as a child, had either been removed, or had never existed. The fact of such a woman's having fallen a victim to the wiles of an accomplished London roué like Sidney Gow, was in a word, pretty much what might have been expected to happen under the circumstances.

But, while this is true enough, it might or might not account for the effect of the final catastrophe upon an individual case. The transition from the pure woman to the impure one, is, unfortunately a phenomenon of such frequent occurrence as to render it not particularly interesting to the student of human nature. The *result* of the transformation, however, is always expected to be about the same. A woman who has taken her first false step thinks

that because *she* knows it all the world either knows it, or will come to know it in time. Having lost her own self-respect, she supposes she has lost the respect of the world at large; and her downfall begins at once and leads her to God only knows what depths of degradation. There are exceptions, however, to every rule; and Kate Dillon had proved herself the exception. With her, reared under conditions where Nature asserted herself in many forms and ways, it probably occurred to her that Nature knew pretty well what she was about in her dealings with the human passions, as she showed herself to be in other matters; and that she might in a measure at least, be considered responsible for their results. At any rate, this particular woman, though ruined according to the world's standard of measuring such things, had *not* been ruined relatively to her own standard of measuring them. The result was, not having lost her own self-respect, she felt she had not lost that of the world; and she demanded it as her right. Then again, being possessed of a strength of character commensurate with the ruggedness of her early life, she had not only been able to stand alone when thrown absolutely upon her own resources, but she had been sustained by the pursuit of an unchangeable purpose, a purpose which the reader may have already partly divined; but which it will be the function of our story to more fully make clear.

So, as has already been said, the astonishing news that her brother was actually in London bent upon her recovery, together with the strange concatenation of events by which he had become the heir to a vast estate of which he as yet did not even know the existence; all this at first made her melancholy, and then puzzled her. To go to a man like Dunbar and acquaint him with the ill tidings of his own downfall, and at the same time tell him of her brother's accession to his position in the world, his fortune, one

might say, his happiness; for fortune and position constitute happiness, was a task beyond her powers. Dunbar was the only human creature who had condescended to treat her as a fellow human creature; or, to state it more truly, he had *not condescended*. He had treated her as a lady out of the natural goodness of his heart. There had been no condescension about it. There had been in his treatment of her a tacit and unconscious recognition of the attitude she had assumed towards her own inner self, which had been ineffably sweet to her. Strong woman as she was, and indifferent to the world's opinion, as she had tried to be, she would cheerfully have laid down her life for that man. And now to be the intermediary through which misfortune was to reach him was a trying ordeal indeed. But, it had to be done. She was not a person to turn back, once having put her hand to the plough. So she had sent a line to Dunbar requesting him to meet her at the little restaurant in Leicester Square. She began the conversation:

"Mr Dunbar, you have always been too kind and good to ever ask me anything about myself or my affairs, knowing from your instincts as a gentleman that such a course would be distasteful to me. Fate, however, has for some inexplicable purpose or reason thrown our destinies together from the first time that we met. Your unaffected goodness to me then gave me an impetus in life unknown before, an impetus, a purpose to repay your goodness if I could. Judge of my despair, my perplexity in coming to you now to announce the worst tidings almost that could befall you; and, more than that, to actually take a part in the tragedy myself!"

"Well, but this looks rather serious, Mrs. Marley," replied Dunbar. "You can't possibly have any *worse* news than you had to tell me when last we met?"

"From your standpoint, possibly not; but from mine, infinitely worse. To begin with, please address me from this

out as Miss Dillon; for I am not married, nor is my name Marley. The latter is an assumed name that I took for purposes of my own, and which, as far at least as you are concerned, I now abandon."

"Yes, I see, Miss Dillon. And now will you do me the favor to tell me your news; for I confess to a good deal of curiosity."

"Let me ask you one or two questions, Mr. Dunbar. First, you had an uncle in America named Dunbar?"

"Yes."

"Second, he settled in Nevada, after having lived for a time in New York?"

"Yes, I have reason to believe so."

"Third, did you ever hear of his having adopted anyone after having quarreled with his people in England?"

"No, not exactly; but, putting what you told me at our last interview together with what I have since learned by consulting certain papers left me by my father, I am quite prepared to believe any story of the kind. Please go on."

"I know from the best possible evidence that your uncle adopted two orphans in a mining camp in Nevada."

"Would you mind telling me their names, and how you came to know of the circumstances?"

"Their name was Dillon; and *I* was one of them!"

"Good God, you; and the other?"

"My brother, Patrick Dillon; who is now in London, and who is the true heir to the estate you are now in possession of."

Dunbar almost reeled in his chair, but, with an impatient gesture, as if not wishing to interrupt the speaker, motioned her to go on.

"I was not aware of the fact that my brother was the heir of your late uncle until last night, when I overheard a conversation which left no possible doubt of the matter in my mind. My brother does not know of it yet."

Then Kate Dillon went on and repeated all she had heard, and fully informed Dunbar of the condition of affairs up to date, ending up by stating that, although she had not yet made herself known to her brother, she expected to do so immediately; but had preferred to acquaint Dunbar with the facts and ask his advice as to how to proceed, before she broached the matter of the inheritance to her brother. Dunbar was thunder-struck; but, after thinking the matter carefully over, said: "Well, there's nothing to be done but to hand over his property to your brother. He will, of course, show me the legal evidence of his title to it, as a matter of form; but, as I have no possible doubt as to its accuracy, there will be no difficulty about the matter; and the sooner it's over, the better I shall be pleased. Tell your brother so, with my compliments, and arrange any meeting between us that you see fit."

"Yes, but your family. Will they take the same view you do of this matter?"

"My wife, yes. We have already arranged to move into less expensive quarters, and shall do so now immediately. My mother and sisters, I am sorry to say, will offer some opposition to your brother's entrance into his inheritance. Just how formidable it will prove I am not in a position to say; but, by the time your brother has made proof of his claim, I assume all difficulties upon the parts of my family will have been cleared away. Women, you know, Miss Dillon, are apt to be a little tenacious of their rights."

"Yes, I know," said Kate, thoughtfully; "but you and your wife are actually going to move out of your house before you are, before—"

"Why not? I was certain when first I heard you speak of this matter that my uncle had made a later will than the one under which I inherited. I did not know in whose favor, it is true; but now that I know, why should I inter-

pose any difficulties? It will come to the same thing in the end. In fact, I congratulate both your brother and yourself, my dear Miss Dillon, upon your good fortune; and may your occupancy of it be longer than mine has been."

"I thank you for your kind wish, Mr. Dunbar; but if I have anything to say in the matter, and I think I shall, matters will be arranged, perhaps, a little differently from what you appear to expect."

As nothing more could be done until Kate had seen her brother, she now took her departure; and Dunbar went home to inform his family of what had taken place. In a few days afterwards, he, his wife and child and two servants were cosily settled in their little house in Eversfield Road, Wandsworth. His mother and sisters remained alone in possession of the Portland Place establishment, and hoisted all kinds of signals of defiance to any possible invader of their fortress.

In the meantime Sharnell and Dobson had had their meeting by appointment at the public house in the Commercial Road. A brief account of it will be in order for the purpose of preserving the entire continuity of our little drama, and for the final disposition of one, at least, of its actors. When the two men met, Sharnell began at once, in compliance with the program arranged between himself and Gow, to intimidate Dobson by working upon his fears of arrest. Gow, he said, had been found, but had absolutely refused to have anything to do with the matter of trying to worm money out of Dunbar; having, as he said, trouble enough on his hands, and having heard indirectly that Dunbar was getting evidence together that would lead to the attempted apprehension of not only himself but of Dobson, whom he suspected was not very far away from London. This being the case, Gow, Sharnell said, was obviously in no mood to go and place himself in Dun-

bar's power; and, in fact, he had flatly declined to do so.

Here Dobson had broken in, as Sharnell had expected him to do, and had asked what he, Sharnell, thought of the advisability of his, Dobson's remaining in London under such conditions. Whereat Sharnell had shrugged his shoulders, in a deprecatory manner, and said that it was hardly competent for him, a layman, to advise a sharp old lawyer like Dobson what to do in an emergency like the present; *but*, he would, if placed in similar circumstances, make as speedy a departure as possible for the continent; leaving his affairs in the best hands he could find to manage them.

So impressive was Sharnell able, aided by Dobson's uneasy conscience, to make his warning appear, that before the meeting was over the latter had inwardly made up his mind to cross over to Ostend by the steamer of that very evening, and without even returning to his hotel to pay his bill and take away his luggage. He arranged with Sharnell to communicate to him his wishes in regard to what was to be done with Dillon as soon as he was in a place of safety. In the meantime he evinced so much uneasiness and desire to be gone that Sharnell finally left him, feeling pretty sure of never seeing him again; a feeling which was afterwards fully justified by the facts. In a word, Dobson took a steamer for Ostend, as already hinted; then having got as far as Brussels, began so much to dread being followed that he never even wrote to Sharnell; and finally drifted so far away from London and the interests and purposes of our story as never to be heard of again.

While all this was going on in one part of London, our young friend Dillon had arrived at his new lodgings in Cutter Street, had been introduced to Gow under the name of Stanford, and to his landlady, Mrs. Macklin. He had been rather taken aback at the squalidness of his sur-

roundings at first, but had consoled himself with the reflection that, in carrying out the directions of the strange woman he had met in the street, he was in all probability putting himself in the best possible train to accomplish the object of his search. Being accustomed, also, to a rough life from early association, the privations of an east end residence for a season were not as onerous as they might have proved to a person differently circumstanced. At any rate, in a very few hours after his arrival in Cutter Street, he had begun to feel as much at home in the place as if he had lived there for the larger portion of his life.

His first interview with Stanford or Gow, had failed to impress him favorably; but, here again, he did not allow himself to be greatly discomfited, feeling sure that in due time the strange woman could be relied upon to arrange a meeting between them. Nor was he disappointed. Kate Dillon, well knowing that her brother had been taken to Cutter Street for the express purpose of getting him away from the influence of Dobson, and under that of Gow and Sharnell, recognized the necessity of extreme caution in communicating with him in such a manner as to arouse the suspicions or the hostility of these men. As Gow, for reasons of his own, kept the house during the day, and as Sharnell would be apt to be there in the evening, each in turn keeping watch over her brother's movements, it was a little difficult to arrange an interview; but she at last managed it through Mrs. Macklin, whom by this time she had fully enlisted in her service. This lady was now requested to give young Dillon a hint that a person was waiting to see him at the house across the street, and, at the same time, to engage Gow in conversation while Dillon had time to slip out and get under cover before Gow could follow him. All this was so successfully managed that the latter gentleman never knew of Dillon's departure until he

had returned to his room after his interview with his sister.

Any attempt to describe or account for the actions of people whose ways of doing and looking at things are absolutely unconventional is necessarily abortive. To attempt to analyze Kate's feelings at the immediate prospect of meeting her brother, to whom in the course of events she must surely confide her relations with Gow, would involve a knowledge, not only of the ordinary, but of the extraordinary human heart; both of which are beyond the powers of the writer.

Suffice it to say, Dillon, on knocking at the door of the house he had been directed to, was admitted by a very slovenly looking woman, whose family likeness to his own landlady did not fail to attract his attention, and was requested to ascend the stairs and enter the front room. He did so, with the result that he found his sister, whom he failed to recognize at first, quietly waiting to receive him.

"And don't you know me, Pat?" she asked, rising to embrace him.

"For the love of God, is that you, Kitty?" said the young man, rushing into her arms where he held her fast for some moments, the tears of joy gushing from his honest eyes.

"Ah, now, sit down, Pat, and listen to me, for it's a long story I've to tell you, and both you and I are watched, or are likely to be if we remain too long together, by the biggest blackguard in London; and that's saying a lot."

"Is it the young divil they call Stanford living in my house, you mean, Kitty?"

"Deed an' it 'tis, Pat; and it's a long score you and I have to settle with that man!"

"I could swear to it, Kitty, by the looks av 'im; but go on with your story. By the Powers, if he's gone anything

but straight with you, my dear, it were better he'd a millstone on his neck and in the middle of the river."

It was noticeable that both Dillon and his sister, both of whom were fairly free from brogue when by themselves, adopted it when they came together. It was probably the result of long youthful association.

"Keep still, Pat, darlin', until I tell my story. But first let me tell you the news; great news, at that. You're a millionaire, Pat, my dear, a millionaire, half a dozen times over! What do you think of that?"

"Nonsense, Kitty, don't be after makin' fun of me. Where would I be getting a million from, let alone more?"

"Listen, Pat, an' I'll tell you. You know well enough that you were the heir to our adopted father, Mr. Patrick Dunbar; God bless him!"

"Yes, of course I know that; but how did *you* know it? It happened after we had lost sight of you altogether, or I should have sent you your share of the estate long ago. Sure, I have it safe enough for you in the Bank of San Francisco, barring a few hundred pounds I've with me in case I found you; which, thank God, I have!"

"Thanks, dear Pat, its the good heart you have, I know full well; and I'll take the money blithely enough, for God knows I need it; but listen, dear, a lot of things have happened you know nothing about which I have found out by accidents which I will tell you of as I go along. In the first place, Mr. Dunbar had a large estate in New York, which even *he* did not know of at the time of his death. You having been made his heir by his will, come into *this* estate as well as the one you have already taken possession of. It runs into the millions, my dear, and there's only one drawback to it, and that is that in taking possession of it you will turn out of it the finest gentleman in the world. A man I would lay down my life to serve."

"Tell me his name, Kitty, darlin', that I may thank 'im

if he's been good to *you*; and tell 'im to keep the estate. Sure, we've enough without it; the two of us!"

"That's my dear Pat!" said Kate, getting up and tenderly kissing her brother. It's myself who knew just how you'd look at this matter; and now, thank God, the thing's easy. With such a heart as yours, Pat, and a heart like young Patrick Dunbar's, we'll soon settle this business. Glory be to God; you're the same true, brave boy I left you."

"The same, Kitty; but, by God, a bad man to any one who's played *you* false, my darlin'; so please get on to that part of your story. The other part of it can wait."

"Yes, Pat, it can. Well, you know, I was for a time in the employment of a family of the name of Gow."

"Yes, I know that; and many's the letter I've written to that family to get word of you, and all that I could find was that you had left for parts unknown."

"They said nothing else?"

"No, not in so many words; but in an underhand way they hinted at things which would not have been well for them to have said in my presence. If there's a *man* left in the family, it's one of the things I've in my mind to do, to call upon 'im and have a few words with 'im; as between man an' man!"

"Right, Pat, so you shall; but, mind you, not on your life until you've got the word from me. Promise me that, Pat, dear; or I'll tell you nothing more of my sad story. Promise."

"Yes, Kitty, I promise; but not until *you* promise to let me get at the man, if what I suspect is true, when the time comes. Is it a bargain?"

"It's a bargain, Pat, an' what you suspect is true, God help me; but without you, and alone, I've followed that man night and day until I've driven him into a place as mean as the one we're now in; hungry, penniless, ruined,

he is; and, by the grace of God, I'll continue to follow him to the ends of the earth until he undoes the wrong he's done me. This I shall do all the easier now you've come, my darlin'; but I'd 'a done it anyhow, and you know I would; for the same blood runs in our veins!"

"Right well I know it, Kitty, my dear, an' the two of us will make life anything but a walk-over for this gentleman; whose name and address you'll now be after givin' me, my dear, if you please!"

"An' you don't blame me, Pat?"

"Do I blame the sweetest and kindest and honestest and truest soul in the world? Do I look like it? Not much, Kitty. It's myself who is to blame for ever having let you leave home alone and unprotected. You'd no call to come to a place like I've found this wicked London to be. I should have known better; but I was but a child at the time, you know, Kitty, an' you mustn't lay it up agin' me. An' now this gentleman's name an' present address, *if* you please."

"His name is Sidney Gow, Pat; and his present address is the same as your own. I arranged to put you near him so that he should never escape us."

"An' you did right, Kitty, my darlin'; he never shall!"

CHAPTER XXI.

There is a story told of an American hunter who all of one morning hunted a bear ; but, about noon, for some probably good and sufficient reason, the relations between the bear and the man got mixed up ; and, as a consequence, all the afternoon the bear hunted the man. This was now what happened to Gow and young Dillon. Left to himself, it is extremely probable that the latter would have called the former to a very strict accounting immediately after he had been apprised of how matters stood between him and his sister. Born and bred in a country where such matters are settled promptly and with very little ceremony, Dillon would have made very short work of the righting of the wrong ; but, having regard to his promise and possibly having convinced himself that nothing would be lost by a temporary delay, he bided his time. But, if Sidney Gow had had a blood-hound after him, he would have stood a much better chance of eluding the pursuit than followed as he was.

It was with some amusement therefore, mingled with contempt, that Dillon now listened to the arguments which Gow brought forward for him to place himself unreservedly in his hands. Sharnell had by this time been introduced to him, and the three were sitting in Gow's room, the evening after the interview between Dillon and his sister had taken place. Gow was explaining to him what a fortunate escape he had made in getting away from Dobson, or Fergu-

son, as Dillon knew him; and having turned up in his, Gow's, and Sharnell's hands.

"You know, Mr. Dillon," said Gow, looking towards Sharnell for approval and confirmation, "London is a pretty bad place. I dislike to say it, being an Englishman, but there are some very bad men in London. Now that man Dobson was a regular bad 'un. As bad as they make 'em."

"Ah!"

"Yes; ask Sharnell, if he wasn't. He'd have robbed you to a dead moral certainty, if you'd remained with him. Whereas, we, Sharnell and I, will not only find your sister for you, in time you understand, such matters require time, naturally; but we'll find something else for you into the bargain. What if there was a fortune waiting for you here in England, Mr. Dillon, a large fortune? Such things happen, you know. What would you be inclined to do for the men who found it for you?"

"A fortune running into a million pounds or so, Mr. Dillon," said Sharnell, rubbing his hands. "Five millions of your money in the States."

"Why, I'd be inclined to do a lot"; replied Dillon, simply, but with an incredulous smile.

"Well, Mr. Dillon, there *is* such a fortune waiting for you; but it will take great care and skill to land it," said Gow, and then he went on and told Dillon all about it, stating how Sharnell had got part of the story from Dobson himself, and part from other sources; but, putting them both together, he and Sharnell, through the perfect understanding which existed between them, plus their acquaintance with Dunbar, and, in general, the most consummate intelligence which illumined them, were just the men for the work. Dillon was most fortunate in having fallen into such hands; most fortunate indeed.

"Yes," said Dillon, after Gow had finished his story,

"but, if you please, I'd rather you'd find my sister first; if you don't mind."

Then Gow, very gingerly suggested that any operations looking to the recovery of lost persons in London were attended with great expense; and, for that reason, he and his friend Sharnell had considered it prudent to assist him in securing his fortune first. With a large sum of ready money in hand, Dillon would be in a position to set agencies in operation which would undoubtedly lead to favorable results immediately. But, to seek to find his sister first, might entail upon him and his friend the disagreeable necessity of asking for money with which to pursue the search; which they should much dislike to do.

Dillon nodded an affirmative to this remark, but, with admirable presence of mind, resisted any temptation to take the hint. In fact, he rose from his chair, yawned, and said he was rather fatigued and thought he would retire for the night; which he immediately proceeded to do. Once in his room, he sat quietly listening to what his friends had to say, his sister having acquainted him with the secret of the closet.

"Rum sort of fellow, seemingly," said a voice which he recognized as Sharnell's. "He somehow doesn't seem to rise to the bait at all. He will be hard to make a bargain with, I'm thinking, when the time comes."

"Yes," said Gow, "these damned Americans puzzle me. They know more of London and of London people two weeks after arriving here from their back woods than we do who've lived here all our lives. A little matter of finding a fortune of five or six millions waiting for them in a place where five or six millions of people are either struggling to get a living, or starving because they can't get one, is an everyday occurrence to a man like our friend Dillon, it would seem, from the way he speaks of it. He smiles when you tell him the news, as if you'd told him

it was a fine day, and says he'd rather find his sister first, if you don't mind. By the way, Sharnell, what are we to do about this finding of his sister? Sooner or later; *sooner* in my case, we'll have to have some money; and, if he insists upon our finding his sister first, we'll have to go to him for money before he gets any from the estate."

"Yes, it's a bit awkward. Have you any idea or clue connected with this sister of his, Gow? You're such a lady's man, I thought you might have heard of someone by the name of Dillon."

There was a silence for a few moments, as if Gow was ransacking his memory for an answer to his friend's question, and then he said with some evident excitement, "By God, Sharnell, your mentioning that name in that connection sets me to thinking. There was a governess in our family some years ago by the name of Kate Dillon, and she was an American. I had a bit of a flirtation with her. In fact, I may as well say I got a little spooney upon her, and went so far as to say I would marry her; never for a moment intending to do so, you understand, no fear; but the little fool took me seriously; and, well, there was a good deal of trouble over the matter at the time. My family got wind of it; and, of course, Miss Kate had to leave. What became of her I never knew. The same as becomes of all the girls who go wrong, I suppose; she came up to London, and went to the devil. I've sometimes thought I've seen her face in a crowd on the streets, and sometimes I've even felt that she or some other girl was following me. One of late, in particular, whose face I can't see, as she goes veiled, has taken the pains to follow me even into the east end. I wonder if by any possibility she could be the one. If she's the one, Sharnell, I'd lose all my share in this deal of ours, and a good deal more, rather than find her; for, if I can read character at

all, I'd stand a small chance of my life with young Dillon if he found out my relations with his sister."

"That shows the beauty of mixing up business with other matters. It spoils the deal for me as well as for you, if it should turn out to be the same girl. But, mind you, *I* go on to the end of this matter, in any case; and don't you stand in my way, or by God, I shall very soon make you stand out of it."

"In which case, I shall be between two fires," said Gow.

"I don't care what you're between. You've had your fun with the girl, and it's only right and proper you should pay for it. I've had no fun, and I'll neither pay for yours nor have it taken out of my share of as pretty a piece of business as I've laid my hand to for many a day. So, Gow, take my word for it, if I see you in any way interfering with my game, I'll put you where you ought to be; and where you'll stay for a long time, once they get hold of you."

"There you are threatening again," said Gow, in a sullen tone. "It's not more than one chance in a million this young Dillon's sister is the girl, at all; and then, if she is, he doesn't know it, and has no means of knowing *me* until he finds her, and she identifies me. All of which is so remote a possibility that it's hardly worth considering; but I couldn't help being struck with the similarity of the names, that's all."

Here the voices ceased, and Dillon heard sounds indicative of a breaking up of the meeting. He retired to his bed, firmly resolved to bring the matter of a reckoning with Gow to a speedy termination, lest that gentleman should suddenly take it into his head to leave for parts unknown. The next day young Dillon and his sister met by appointment and discussed the situation. As a result, both came to the conclusion that Dunbar had by all means better be taken into their confidence. To this end, Kate wrote to

that young gentleman asking for an interview, and received an answer requesting her to bring her brother to his house in Wandsworth upon an evening which he named.

Kate, in anticipation of this event, and by means of her brother's money had already completely refitted her wardrobe; so that upon the appointed evening, she and young Dillon made a most creditable appearance at Dunbar's house. Helena having been fully apprised of the position of affairs by her husband, and feeling the greatest interest in the matter of righting a great wrong, did everything in her power to make Kate feel at ease, and the latter more than appreciated her goodness. In almost any assembly of men and women, if the latter will only elect to get on with each other, there is seldom much difficulty in managing the former. It was certainly so upon this occasion, at any rate. Dunbar, upon being introduced to Dillon, shook him warmly by the hand, and introduced him and his sister to Mrs. Dunbar. After a very brief conversation, in which Dunbar became absolutely certain of the justice of Dillon's claim, they took up the consideration of Kate's relations with Gow. In this discussion both Helena and Kate took part, it appearing to all concerned the most sensible thing they could do under the circumstances. Before more than half arriving at the kernel of the matter, it became painfully evident to all that Kate's utter helplessness and lack of knowledge of the world had been taken advantage of by a heartless scoundrel to such an extent as to absolutely excuse the victim.

Kate told her story with an artlessness which carried conviction with it, and when asked what she desired to have done, replied, simply: "I only desire to have that man's promise fulfilled."

"Yes, but think what a marriage to such a man means!" said Helena.

"Think, rather, what a failure of marriage means," re-

plied Kate, flushing up. "I have lived long enough under such a stigma; and I shall bear it no longer. Unaided and alone, I should have compelled that man to keep faith with me. As matters stand now," she added, looking towards her brother admiringly, "he will be a dead man within a week, or he will have kept his word with me."

"By God, you warm the cockles of my heart to hear you talk like *that*, Kitty, darlin'," said Dillon.

"But you can't feel any affection for such a man?" said Helena.

"That's got nothing whatever to do with it," said Kate. "We'll talk about *that* after he's made an honest woman of me."

"So we will," echoed young Dillon.

And then it was arranged between the men that Dillon should make an appointment with Gow for the following evening for the avowed purpose of discussing his affairs. In the meantime Dunbar and his wife should join Kate at her lodgings, and, at word reaching them through Mrs. Macklin that everything was in readiness, should proceed in a body to Dillon's room. And so it was. The next day Dillon spoke to Gow and told him he thought the time had come for a frank talk with him about several matters, his sister in particular, and requested the favor of an interview for the evening. He also requested, as the matters under consideration in no manner related to Sharnell, that that gentleman should be excluded from the conference. All this mightily pleased our friend Gow, as he now began to see his way to the execution of a plan he had long had in his mind, which was no other than to permanently exclude his partner Sharnell from any participation in the profits arising from the settlement of Dillon's affairs. This would have been a matter attended with some difficulty without Dillon's assistance; but, with it, it would become comparatively easy; and so he entered into the ar-

rangement proposed by that gentleman with enthusiasm; little dreaming what was to be the result.

So they met, as agreed. "Mr. Stanford," began Dillon, "a good deal of time has elapsed since my arrival in London; and, as far as appearances go, nothing has been accomplished in forwarding the chief matter which brought me here. I refer to the recovery of my sister."

"Yes, Mr. Dillon," Gow replied, unsuspectingly, "a good deal of time has certainly passed, as you say; but, at last you have done the thing you should have done at the very first; you have come to *me*. Of course you didn't know it, and so there's little or nothing to be said; but *I* am the man, not only to find your sister, but to put you into the possession of your estate. All I ask of you for the present is to absolutely confide in me, and to give no ear to what any one else has to say. This man Sharnell, for instance, is a good man in his way, a *very* good man; but, you see, he doesn't belong to our class, and his perceptions are all wrong. He can't for a moment appreciate the feelings of a brother anxiously seeking to recover a long-lost sister."

"Yes," said Dillon, "anyone could see *that*. Now, with you, it's altogether different. *You* can appreciate a brother's feelings for a sister, Mr. Stanford. Possibly you have a sister of your own; and, for that very reason can sympathize with a man who wishes to save his sister from the dangers of a place like London. I appreciate such sympathy, Mr. Stanford, and am only too glad to place myself unreservedly in your hands. A fine sense of honor, Mr. Stanford, where a woman's good name is concerned is rare in a wicked place like London; and I am delighted to recognize it in you. You must have had a careful bringing up. I can imagine your early life spent amidst the safe and innocent surroundings of an English country home, a good mother, a number of sisters, perhaps, a sensible, God-

fearing father, and all the peace and quiet of a Christian home."

Gow winced a little, but replied, "Oh, yes, Mr. Dillon, I do assure you, that's exactly the life I led before I came up to London. But look at Sharnell for the other side of the picture. There's a man who probably never in his life had a good smell of the fresh, clean air of the English country. He was born and brought up in this horrible London, and has had the smells of the gutters in his nostrils ever since. What a man to entrust a man's sister or her happiness to for a single instant."

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Stanford, and what you say impresses me with absolute faith that when the time comes you will do the right thing by *my* sister. And now, Mr. Stanford," said Dillon, looking his man full in the face, and pulling his chair closer to Gow's, as if to impress him with the importance of what he had to say: "Now, sir, listen to me. Since my arrival in London, I have not been inactive by any means. We Americans, Mr. Stanford, are a singular people; we work day and night for the accomplishment of our ends, and we never give in. We don't know the meaning of the words discouragement or fatigue, when we are once enlisted in a cause we consider worthy of our attention. We become anxious, restless, eager, selfish, aggressive, and a good many other things; *but*, we generally end up by accomplishing what we set out to do. You English people hate us for all these qualities, and make fun of us; and I don't altogether blame you. However, we'll let that pass for the moment, as only explaining how and why I should have made as much progress in my search for my sister as I have; a stranger in a strange land."

Gow by this time began to show some signs of uneasiness, but said nothing. Dillon went on: "Yes, Mr. Stanford, I've found out a lot about my poor sister, a good deal of

which may be of assistance to you in conducting *your* search for her. For instance, she was employed as a governess in a family by the name of Gow, shortly after her arrival in England from America."

Here Gow decidedly changed color, and gave other unmistakable signs of conscious guilt; but Dillon still looked him full in the face, and went on mercilessly. "In this family by the name of Gow, Mr. Stanford, there was, it appears, a young blackguard, who under an apparently sincere promise of marriage, took certain liberties with my sister; with the usual result, in this Christian England of yours: she was ruthlessly, wickedly driven out of the house in which she had been ruined by the son and heir of the house, and came up to London, as thousands of poor girls do every year, to be further put upon and wronged by the gilded youth of this Christian country of yours. The pig-headed public opinion of this still Christian country of yours which makes it all right for the rich young men to do certain things, but all wrong for the poor young women to do them, completed the ruin of my poor sister, as far it was able to do so; and, according to the standards of morality, very properly considers her as absolutely and irretrievably ruined. But, according to *my* standard and *hers*, my sister is not ruined at all. She is simply waiting for the man who fully *intended* to ruin her to come forward and fulfil his promise."

Here Gow turned very white, and looked furtively up into the face of his interlocutor. What he saw there could hardly have afforded him much comfort; for he suddenly rose from his chair, and made a movement towards the door, at which Dillon coolly drew a revolver from his hip pocket, and, with no more ostentation than if he were doing the most ordinary thing in the world, quietly covered him, as he said: "I'll trouble you, Mr. Sidney Gow, to take your seat, and to remain there until I have finished

what I have to say. I've only just commenced." Then, rising and going himself to the door, he opened it, and going out into the passage, called to Mrs. Macklin over the stairs: "You may show my friends up, now, if you please," and then returned to his room.

Footsteps of several people were now heard on the stairs, and then Dunbar, his wife and Kate Dillon entered the room. Gow almost collapsed with fright; but, warned by Dillon, made no further demonstration than to turn even paler than before, if that were possible, and to turn from Dillon to Dunbar, as if curious to see which of these two men might now be looked to to give him his *coup-de-grace*.

"Now, Mr. Sidney Gow," said Dillon, "still holding his pistol in his hand as a playful reminder of the inadvisability of making any resistance to a fair proposition he had to make him, "Now, sir, here is my sister, Miss Kate Dillon, whom you asked to be your wife. She is a thousand, a million times too good for you; that goes without saying; but, having been foolish enough to once accept you as her husband, she adheres to her promise and expects you to fulfill yours. I, her brother, am also here to insist upon it. And now, sir, I'll trouble you to state your views upon the subject."

"You intend to *force* me to marry your sister, *do* you?" asked Gow, with a sickly smile, and some show of resistance. "You can't do that kind of thing in this country, you know, Mr. Dillon. It won't answer at all. Out in the wilds of America I assume it is different altogether; but you mustn't attempt to bully or intimidate an Englishman, you know."

"Out in my country, Mr. Gow," said Dillon, "you'd have been a dead man long ago. As it is, I'm doing what I consider the proper and right thing in affording you an opportunity to voluntarily right a great wrong you have done. As you don't seem to avail of it, as I supposed you

would, I *now* have to tell you that I shall take the greatest possible pleasure in putting a bullet into your head as speedily as possible, after I have found it to be a fact that you refuse to fulfil your promise to my sister."

"But that would be murder," said Gow, wriggling in his chair, uncomfortably, as if fearing that Dillon's pistol might be accidentally discharged before the expiration of the given time. Just then Dunbar rose from his chair, and approaching Gow, took from his wallet a bundle of papers, which he quietly unfolded and held before his eyes so that he could easily identify them. "Gow," he said, "under ordinary circumstances, I should have pocketed the loss occasioned by the little irregularity you have been guilty of in regard to these bills; but, as matters stand now, you will immediately consent to doing what Mr. Dillon demands of you, or to-morrow morning I shall apply for a warrant for your arrest on a charge of forgery. Now, make your choice at once, as time presses."

A silence ensued, during which each one in the room appeared to be watching the progress of events from his or her own standpoint, and then Gow said, in a sullen manner, "and if I *do* marry this woman, will that settle the matter of the, er, bills?"

"As far as *I* am concerned," said Dunbar, "yes. What final settlement Mr. Dillon will make with you, will depend upon him and not upon me; as it is really him you have robbed, and not me."

"All *that* can be arranged," said Dillon, "the matter now before us is to complete this marriage; and I am still waiting to hear your decision."

Gow thought a moment, as if to give color to the assumption that he was not being intimidated, and then asked: "How soon must this be done, if done at all."

"To-morrow," said Dillon, quietly.

"That's rather short notice for such a serious step, isn't it?" asked Gow.

"Perhaps," said Dillon; "but my poor sister has found it rather a long time since your first promise was made her, and you'll keep her waiting no longer, if you please."

"Who's to prevent my taking my time in a matter like this?"

"You have altogether misunderstood me if you have failed to appreciate the fact that *I* will prevent you," said Dillon, sternly. "I shall remain with you until you either do what I intend you *shall* do, or until I find that you will not do it; and then certain things will begin to happen. Have the goodness to waste no more of either your own or my time in compelling me to go over this matter again."

"And you intend to remain here until I do what you want me to do?"

"Absolutely."

"What if I raise a cry, and call for the police, as I think of doing. You'd soon find out that you couldn't force a native-born Englishman beyond his will."

"The best possible way to find out what you desire to know is to try it," coolly answered Dillon. "And, now, Mr. Gow, in the meantime, are you going to marry my sister, or not?" Answer me, one way or the other, and at once."

"Yes, I am," came the answer, in a sullen tone and manner, and then the party broke up, except as to Dillon and Gow, who remained watching each other the rest of the night. The bear mentioned at the beginning of this chapter had successfully cornered the man; instead of the other way about, as had originally been intended.

CHAPTER XXII.

No one knows, no one probably ever will know what conjunctions of the heavenly bodies preside at the birth of a given human impulse. Possibly, the heavenly bodies have nothing whatever to do with it; which is another way of saying that there is no such thing as predestination, and that things happen according to no set rule, but are subject to circumstances which arise at the time, and over which no one has any control whatever. Whatever it was, therefore, that in the brief space of one night changed Sidney Gow from an apparently reluctant bridegroom into an apparently eager one, will probably forever remain his own secret, unless he chooses to reveal it. It might have been the short glimpse of eternity offered him over the barrel of Dillon's revolver, the evening before, which promised a still longer one in case of a refusal on his part to act reasonably; it might have been a complete change of heart upon his part, it might have been entirely mercenary considerations, based upon his knowledge of Dillon's and his sister's changed prospects in life.

Whatever it was, as much of the sun as it was possible to see through the fog of the east end of London at that time of the year rose upon a changed man in the person of our friend Gow on the morning of the day succeeding the one upon which the interview detailed in the last chapter had been held. Dillon had spent a sleepless night in watching lest his man should by any means escape him, to be accosted cheerily by Gow in the morning with "Well,

brother-in-law to be, this is our wedding morning; and so let's get about it. A license is the first thing in order, and I suppose you'll prefer to go with me to obtain it?"

"Rather," replied Dillon.

"And then there are a few arrangements to be made at the church, the pew-opener has to be subsidized, the parson and the rest of them have to be interviewed and set right; so, all things considered, we shall have all we can do to get through with the morning's work, and we'd better make an early start."

"The earlier the better, as far as I am concerned," said Dillon, in some astonishment at the sudden change of heart in his friend.

"And the ladies have finally decided upon St. George's, Hanover Square, for the church, have they?"

"I believe so. We all intend to have the wedding in the best church in London, and to show every respect to the bride. Don't make any mistake about *that*, Mr. Gow."

"No, on the contrary, I quite subscribe to the sentiment. In fact, I should prefer now to wait a day or two in order to get a special license from the Archbishop of Canterbury; but I suppose that would hardly suit your views?"

"Not at all. This matter can't wait a day, an hour!"

"Well, then the only thing to be done is to get a license from the Registrar of the district, and the marriage can take place immediately, either in church, or at the Registrar's office."

"Let the ladies have their way. They are set upon a marriage in church, and in church it shall be."

"All right, I've nothing more to say." So the two men went for the license, and upon their return to their lodgings made short work of getting Gow into clothing suitable for the coming event. The same process was going on in Eversfield Road among the women. Helena presided over the dressing of the bride; and, when the two parties

met at the church, a very fairly well appointed bridal couple they made, as far as the public is able to judge of such matters by outside appearances. At any rate, the service was performed with all the pomp and circumstance of the English ritual, the proper observance of every form or custom was insisted upon by Dillon, everyone who assisted in any manner whatever was duly and liberally remembered, the parish register was duly signed and witnessed; and, at last the wedding party stood upon the porch of the church, surrounded by the small crowd of interested or curious people who always manage to be present on such occasions. Among the party themselves, with only one exception, the bride, there seemed to be an anxious and uncertain moment now. Nothing had so far been said as to the future relations of the newly married couple. *That* matter had been left to take care of itself. Kate, however, had undoubtedly settled the matter long before, in her own mind, as only women can settle such things.

"And now, sir," she said to her husband, just as she was about to enter her carriage to be driven away, "now, sir, having at last fulfilled your promise to me, you are free to go where you please. I shall trouble you no more, nor shall I expect to be troubled by you. I wish you no greater evil than the thoughts that will come to your mind whenever you look upon the lost women in a great city like London, and realize what a salvation even such a hollow form as we have just gone through would be to many of them. Very many of these poor creatures were promised in apparent good faith the joys, the protection of marriage; as I was. They were cruelly disappointed, their hearts were broken, their pride humiliated, and they became the wretched creatures they are. They are to be more pitied than condemned; and may God have mercy upon them, the mercy that they will never receive from their fellow men and women! Farewell."

Saying which, quietly and with no apparent bitterness, the singular woman stepped into the carriage occupied by Dunbar and his wife. Dillon followed them, and the four drove rapidly away, leaving Gow standing alone upon the church porch.

Now that the object of Kate's sojourn in the east end had been attained, there was no occasion for her further residence there. The same reason applied to Dillon with equal force; so, having been cordially invited by Dunbar and Helena to make their house their home until other arrangements could be made, they gladly accepted the invitation, and the two families joined forces immediately after the wedding. The effect upon Kate, now Mrs. Sidney Gow, of the relief from her former unfortunate condition, and the present happiness and prosperity which surrounded her was simply marvellous. In a few short weeks after her arrival at the Dunbars', she became a light-hearted, beautiful, and charming woman. Helena and she had liked each other from the start, but now became inseparable. Dunbar and Dillon hit it off equally well, and became fast friends. Eversfield Road, Wandsworth, at the time of which we speak, was a new street which had been laid out through an old apple orchard in that part of London. Like many other of the better suburbs, Wandsworth, or this part of it, was extremely pretty and desirable in every way as a residence. There still remaining several new and empty houses near the Dunbars, Dillon one day announced his intention of taking one of them for his own and his sister's occupancy. This brought up the whole question of the relinquishment on the part of Dunbar to Dillon of his estate; to which the latter had replied that he and his sister were in no possible haste about entering into possession, and much preferred for the present at least to remain near such good friends as they had found the Dunbars to be.

"Yes, my dear boy," Dunbar had replied, "but this won't do. You are fully entitled to your estates. I don't dispute your claim, which you have fully established by this time. Now why don't you take possession?"

"Well, for one thing, Dunbar, I'm perfectly happy and contented as I am. I am not used to luxury, and would feel out of place in a grand house. So would Kate. That's reason number one. Then, there are the ladies of your family to be considered; your mother and sisters. They are as much accustomed to their way of living as Kate and I are to ours. So why disturb them? Reason number two. Then, I allow myself to be guided a good deal by Kate in such matters, and Kate, I fear, will never consent to live in a house from which such good friends as you and your dear wife have been driven by adverse circumstances. So, my dear boy, you will do my sister and me a great service if you will allow matters to stand just where they are for the present. You have made over to me the income arising from the estate in a most handsome and generous manner; so I am rich beyond my most sanguine expectations. Let the matter of the apparent possession of the landed property remain to settle itself. Some day your mother and sisters will perhaps tire of keeping up the properties upon a diminished income, and then it will be time enough to make different arrangements."

And this was done. No two men or two women ever understood each other better, nor valued each other more than Dillon and Dunbar, and Kate and Helena. As to the ladies at Portland Place, they remained in the position they had assumed at the start, of open defiance. They had engaged expensive counsel, and were all prepared for the opening of hostilities; which, to their evident surprise, never opened. A large portion of their income was cut off by the release Dunbar made to Dillon of the New York rents and other dividends, but enough still remained

to support them in fairly good style; and more than enough to keep them in good fighting condition. As relations between Dunbar and his family were considerably strained already, this condition of affairs hardly tended to restore the lost equilibrium; and they saw very little of each other. Finally, however, came the time when the family at Portland Place usually closed that house and went to their country seat in Devonshire. The ladies were fearful of an invasion on the part of the Dillons as soon as their backs should be turned, and, also, it is to be assumed, were by this time a little conscience-stricken at the wrong-headedness and absurdity of the position they had taken up. Their lawyer, after a careful examination of the papers Dillon had submitted to him, had been compelled to advise them that they had absolutely no case in law; and that they only retained their present possession by reason of the courtesy and admirable forbearance of the true owners of the estate. In due time this idea had so far penetrated the rather coarse fibre of Mrs. Dunbar's make-up as to at least excite her curiosity to see what manner of man it was, who, having a perfect claim to a large estate, refrained from pressing it. This curiosity was largely shared by the young ladies; so much so, indeed, that it now became a question as to how a meeting between the young man and themselves could be brought about with the least loss of prestige to their family pride. As to any possible social intercourse with the sister, after the life she had led up to her marriage, that was, of course, out of the question. In the eyes of the law, and those of the world at large, Mrs. Sidney Gow was now an eminently respectable member of society; but to these ladies she was pretty much as she had always been, vastly inferior, and not to be associated with on any terms.

In the meantime, Dillon and his sister being possessed of large means, had assumed a manner of life, which, although

modest as measured by their wealth, was extremely comfortable and refined. They had both improved in appearance and in that ineffable air and bearing which the consciousness of large wealth always imparts to a person. They were in a word stylish; a word which presupposes not only *good* style, but conformity with it. They were, at any rate, very good to look upon: A strong, well-knit figure of a man, bronzed by the active out-of-door life he had led in his native wilds, simple and unspoiled in manner, young, handsome and graceful, richly endowed with natural goodness, and with as good an education as the college life of an American provincial town could supply. Add to all this a certain air of lofty independence, a physical and moral courage, a natural personal dignity which no one who knew him would ever think of trespassing upon, and you had a pretty fair description of Patrick Dillon, the man; but, when this kind of man had submitted himself to a west end tailor, haberdasher, barber, jeweler, and all the other people who take a hand in adorning and developing all the physical points of a man; the result was all that it could be expected to be.

And, as to Kate, what with her own good taste, and Helena's, plus a good deal of natural beauty, and now the charm of restored happiness, self-respect and womanly dignity, she too was good to look upon. There was, it is true, in Kate's make-up, an independence, a strength of character, and an ability to stand alone, both physically and morally, which had been at once the cause and the result of her peculiar life. Not one woman in a million, it is safe to say, could have passed through the ordeal she had without being hopelessly ruined. Kate, on the contrary, had been strengthened by it; but, it had imparted to her bearing a certain hauteur which rendered her difficult of approach except to those she loved and respected. To such persons she proved herself a loyal, tender and un-

changing friend. For Dunbar, whom she had found, at a time when courtesy and kindness was an unknown experience in her life, not only courteous but kind, there was no sacrifice however great, that she would not have cheerfully submitted to. And now, for Helena, who, although a woman, had comprehended and sympathized with her in her troubles and the brave stand she had made against them, she had conceived an affection of the absolutely unreasoning kind which we look for only in a dog; uncomplimentary as it may appear to our common human nature to make the comparison. So the quartette, comprising Dunbar, Helena, Kate and Patrick Dillon became so firmly bound together as to constitute really a unit. They were inseparable.

One afternoon, this "unit," then, was returning from a drive in the park, when Dunbar became sensible of a very searching gaze directed at the occupants of his carriage from another one at a short distance from them, but separated by several vehicles, as would naturally be the case in a crowded street like Piccadilly at the fashionable driving hour. The moment his eye caught the glance, it was withdrawn; and a parasol had been so placed as to shield the face from which the look had been directed; but not soon enough, however, to prevent Dunbar's recognizing his mother and his sister Alice in their carriage. In order, evidently, to widen the distance between the two carriages, Mrs. Dunbar was now seen to give an order to her coachman in an excited and angry manner, as was her wont in speaking to servants, the immediate result of which was, during the temporary inattention to his horses occasioned by his turning his head to receive the order, to cause a collision with a heavily laden omnibus, which tore off one of the wheels of the dowager lady Dunbar's carriage; as if it had been the wheel of an infant perambulator. Immediately a general stoppage of the entire

traffic of a tremendously crowded street was the result of the accident. The admirable police, for which London is so justly famous, were on hand in a jiffy, and rendered yoe-man service; but the smash-up was a particularly bad one, and the occupants of the Dunbar carriage, for a moment or two, were in very considerable personal danger. Added to the fact that the collision was in the first instance entirely the fault of the driver of this carriage, the unreasonable and arrogant bearing of Mrs. Dunbar augmented the difficulty to an alarming degree. As soon as this lady found that neither she nor her daughter had been injured, she began a series of screams of fright, intermingled with invectives of the most scathing kind addressed to pretty much everyone within hearing distance of her voice. She abused the unfortunate driver of the bus, threatening him with either capital punishment or imprisonment for life, or both, at the same time calling upon the police in very uncomplimentary language to arrest each and every one in their immediate vicinity, regardless of sex, age or possible or impossible responsibility for the accident. The crowd took all this good-naturedly at first, as a London crowd is wont to do under ordinary circumstances; but the limit of their patience was reached at last at some imprudent remark made by the infuriated gentlewoman, and matters began to look unpleasantly like a street row of no mean proportions, when Dunbar, accompanied by Dillon, arrived on the scene. Mrs. Dunbar's carriage being injured hopelessly beyond any temporary repair which would set it on its way, was now being rather roughly and uncereemoniously removed to the side of the street by the main strength of several policemen, assisted by some of the men of the crowd. Mrs. Dunbar, not apparently seeing any real reason why the whole traffic of that portion of London should not be stopped by her disabled carriage remaining just where it was, in the middle of the street, was using the

most unparliamentary language in support of her contention, without much effect, it is true, in the desired direction, but with a most appreciable one, as measured by its effect upon the crowd.

"Ooray for her grace the duchess of nowhere at all," shouted one young man, with a derisive grin.

"'Ats hoff," cried another. "It's the queen of the Cannibal Islands, and no duchess at all. 'Ats hoff!"

This last speaker, standing near the carriage of the unfortunate lady Dunbar, accompanied his little pleasantry by approaching the ladies still more closely and giving Miss Alice a most offensive look, which might have ended in a still more flagrant annoyance, had not at that instant the fellow received a powerful and well-directed blow from a gentleman who had come to the ladies' rescue. The gentleman was Dillon. The fellow, who had been knocked off his feet by the force of Dillon's blow, was being cared for by someone in the crowd, when Dunbar came up. The fighting now became general and serious. Of course the police did their best; but they were hopelessly overpowered, and the crowd, from having been a perfectly good natured one, had by this time become a very angry one, thanks to the superior diplomacy of the elder Mrs. Dunbar. Then, again, howsoever much even an angry crowd might have respected the sanctity of womanhood, their attitude was at once changed upon the arrival of two men on the scene of action; and Dunbar and Dillon were being sorely pressed. They both fought like heroes, however, especially Dillon; who, cool as a cucumber, knocked his assailants about as if they had been children. His powerful, splendid strength could not have displayed itself to better advantage, while his bright, handsome face, clothed with a winning smile, however pressing his danger, was god-like; and nothing else.

Matters began to assume a very serious aspect indeed by this time, when the ladies in the Dunbar carriage whose

foolishness had been accountable for the whole disturbance, now did the only sensible thing they were apparently capable of doing—they fainted; both of them. Seeing this, Dunbar called out to his companion: "Take my sister and carry her to our carriage, and I'll look out for my mother. It's the only thing to be done; and it can't be done too quickly."

"Right," said Dillon, laconically, and making a successful lunge in the direction of the carriage, by good luck secured the inanimate person of Alice, and lifting it lightly in his arms bore it in triumph away; the crowd, as if at last comprehending the situation, making way for him. In a moment, Alice was gently laid in a place of safety in the Dillons' carriage; and, in another, Mrs. Dunbar, carried by her son, was also safely transferred from a place of danger to a secure harbor. Then the gentlemen got in and seated themselves as best they could, having regard to the crowded condition incident to six persons being pressed into the space designed for four, drove rapidly away in the direction of Portland Place, amid the cheers and jeers of the rapidly disappearing crowd. The incident was now closed and the crowded street soon settled down into its former state, as if nothing of any particular importance had taken place.

Upon arriving at Portland Place, the whole party alighted and the exigencies of the case made it natural for all of them to enter the house. In fact, the elder Mrs. Dunbar and Alice were hardly in a condition to have made any objection to such a proceeding, had they been so minded, as they had neither of them fully recovered consciousness, and both had to be carried bodily from the carriage to the house. All this naturally enough occasioned the greatest consternation and excitement on the parts of the younger Miss Dunbar, Mary, and the servants. A medical man must be sent for, of course, and all sorts

and degrees of 'first aid' must be applied in the meantime; each in deference to a new and original, if not entirely efficacious recipe suggested by as many would-be doctors.

Finally, however, the ladies came to themselves, and Mrs. Dunbar's usual tact accompanied her returning consciousness. "Pads," she exclaimed to her son, in a voice quite loud enough for Dillon, who was standing near, to hear what was said, "remember, these people came to the house quite by accident, and no legal advantage must be taken of it."

"No fear of that," Dunbar whispered in her ear; "but don't you think it might be well to thank Mr. Dillon for the manly way in which he came to your assistance in your danger?"

"Oh, well, yes; but I really don't see how he could have done much less, do you? Any man, who *is* a man, would have done the same. Of course I thank him, if that's what he and his sister are waiting for."

"I think, on the contrary, mother, they are both waiting for nothing more nor less than to ascertain that you and Alice are not injured; and will be only too glad to retire immediately now that you have returned so fully to consciousness as to say such an ungracious thing."

This conversation had been for the most part conducted in a tone of voice too low for the Dillons to hear what was said; but the atmosphere was decidedly chilly, even without a knowledge of what was actually going on in the minds of the occupants of the Portland Place establishment, and Dillon, and his sister, accompanied by Dunbar and Helena, now took their departures. Accident, however, had been more potent than design in bringing the conflicting parties of the two families together; and now that the ice was effectually broken, all sorts of things might be reasonably expected to happen.

CHAPTER XXIII.

We left Mr. Sidney Gow standing upon the porch of St. George's Church, immediately after the wedding. To all outward appearing, certainly, his hopes of forgiveness on the part of his wife had proved illusory. The small crowd of professional marriage attendants which still hung about evidently saw that something unusual had taken place, and began a kind of personal inspection of the apparently stranded and deserted bridegroom; which, in his present state of mind, was, to say the least of it, disagreeable. Nor was this all: Although the newspaper reporter is not such an important factor in English as in American life, still, all matters relating to such matters as marriages and deaths in the upper circles of society are eagerly sought after by the London papers, and very soon Gow found himself surrounded by several inquisitive reporters, who, having just taken a look at the parish register in the church were already in possession of all the leading facts concerning the marriage, and were now anxious for further particulars. As one after another of these gentlemen of the press now came up and politely requested him for information, endeavoring by every device known to the trade to engage him in conversation, Gow began suddenly to discover that he had better take his departure from a place where every moment of delay would be considered in the light of valuable material for newspaper comment under the possible heading of "A Mysterious Marriage in High Life." So, angrily dismissing the reporters with a "Nothing whatever to say for publication," the deserted bride-

groom walked away from the church, leaving the crowd behind him.

He was very soon walking down Regent Street towards Piccadilly Circus, revolving many things in his mind. His present position was hardly an enviable one, from any point of view. To be sure, his fears of an arrest in connection with his bill transactions had been set at rest for the time being. He had both Dunbar's and Dillon's word for *that*; and then it stood to reason, that, as matters stood now, a scandal of such a kind as a criminal action against him was to be avoided at any sacrifice. So, as far as *that* matter was concerned, he felt he could walk the streets in almost perfect safety. But he was hopelessly in debt, and he was penniless. He had estranged all his former friends without a single exception; and, of course, he could now look for no more assistance from his Bankers. By far his most pressing and imminent danger, however, was his position relative to his late confederate, Sharnell. That gentleman could not and would not understand his latest move; and he, Gow, could hardly expect him to. At his last interview with Sharnell, matters had been advancing in a line with that gentleman's hopes of a speedy realization of a very tidy sum of money. In such a condition of mind, for him to be informed upon his very next visit at Gow's late quarters in Cutter Street that he, Gow, had suddenly left for parts unknown after having procured a marriage license, a fact well-known to his landlady, would only result in one thing; Sharnell would search London, would follow him everywhere, anywhere, until he found him; and then he would kill him!

There was no possible good in trying to disguise or cloak this conclusion from his inner consciousness; it *was so*, and that was all there was about it. By means of some of Dunbar's, now Dillon's money, he might have hoped to avert the impending danger. As a result of his marriage, he might with some justification have relied upon such aid

and comfort from his newly-created brother-in-law; but, the action of the whole family party in turning their backs upon him at the church door had left very little solid ground whereon he could build such an expectation now. As it had turned out, Dillon had evidently no intention whatever of *buying* Gow's fulfilment of his duty to his sister. He had *compelled* it. He could hardly go to him now, and expect to get money from him on the plea of poverty. He had irrevocably lost any such leverage as that by delivering the goods in advance.

What was he to do? With no luggage and no money, he could not go and take new quarters. He knew London far too well for that. He would not even attempt it. He had long since, by his sudden disappearance, lost his old lodgings and his belongings in the west end. To be sure, Dillon, at Mrs. Macklin's urgent request had squared Gow's account with that lady; but, somehow he found it extremely difficult to return to her now, having revisited his old haunts in the part of the town to which he had been accustomed by long association. Then again, there was Sharnell to be reckoned with. He might, it is true, be able to explain matters to that gentleman in such manner as to convince him of his entire good faith in what had lately taken place in regard to his marriage; but, he might not. Or still another supposition, he might *appear* to be able to explain matters, and feel secure in his conviction that he had done so only to find himself mistaken, and to suffer from Sharnell's well-known vindictiveness at a later date, and at some unexpected and unprotected moment. Being a good deal of a trickster himself, Gow was naturally enough upon the lookout for similar qualities in his friends.

No, all things considered, the east end appeared quite as dangerous to him just now as a place of residence as the west end; and both were bad enough. He had reached Piccadilly Circus by this time, and, although still early in the day, he knew he was likely at any moment to jostle

against any of his old friends. Piccadilly Circus, at *any* time of the day or night is a bad place for any man to remain long in who desires to remain unseen. It is one of the gathering places of London, and a favorite spot for detectives to hover about. Gow, as said before, while pretty confident of remaining unmolested by his friends on account of his late irregularities, well knew that such matters are sometimes taken up by the Government; and that in such an event his friends would be powerless to protect him. His old friend Inspector Evans might be looking about in this part of town, and snap him up on the off chance of doing a good turn for both himself and Dunbar. Once arrested, he well knew that tremendous pressure would be brought to bear upon the latter to push the prosecution against him.

So, he passed on as quickly as possible down Waterloo Place into Pall Mall, then into Cockspur Street to Trafalgar Square, where, in the shadow of the Nelson Monument, he came to a halt. Here was a tolerably safe place for him to rest a moment or two before entering the Strand; which, as everyone knows, is the most dangerous place in London, perhaps in the world, for a hunted man to be seen in. "Here," said the unfortunate young man to himself, "Here I stand until I make up my mind what to do."

He felt in his trousers pockets, and muttered, "A few pieces of silver; a matter of ten or fifteen shillings, perhaps, between me and absolute starvation. Now, what's to be done? I can't stay here, and I've no money to leave with. I might take a pier-head jump, get on a ship as a common sailor, and work my way to India or Australia, or the States, or South Africa; but what should I do without money or friends, when I got there? It would be far wiser to take my 'pier-head' jump directly into the river, instead of into the small boat which was to take me to a ship, and have the matter over with. It would be a disagreeable thing, a plunge into the cold filthy water of

the river on such a day as this; but it would be soon over, and I should be at rest! My body would be found in a day or two, a coroner's jury would sit upon me, I should be identified, and my friends notified; a sensation of a day or two, and then oblivion."

So tempting did this prospect appear to the desperate man for a few moments, that he was almost on the point of carrying it out; but then the thought of what it all meant came to his mind. There's absolutely no truer saying than: "Where there is life, there's hope."

Just then a picture of the woman he had so recently left at the church door passed before his eyes; his wife. Only a short few days or weeks ago and the thought of that woman had been hateful to him; but that was all changed now. From the depths of his present misery, she had become fair to look upon. From having appeared vastly his inferior, she had now become as vastly his superior. So rapidly does the position of our affairs relatively to each other change and shift in the kaleidoscope of life! A new hope had already taken root and was beginning to spring up in his heart in regard to this woman, formerly so despised; now so far above him. Visions of home and fireside, children, friends floated before his mind. It might still be; all this. It was worth working for, waiting for. Then the feeling of despair returned: "Yes, it might be; but how? An outcast and a wanderer he had become as a result of his own misdeeds. What guarantee of himself had he that his future life would differ from his past? Or, if he had one, by what means could it all be brought about? In a few hours he must both be fed and be sheltered for the night, or he would starve or freeze, as the case might be. This eating and shelter must go on for months, for years, before he could accomplish much in the direction of his new hopes. Where was the money coming from to give him his start?"

Just then, more from force of habit than from any anticipation of results, he recommenced a careful reconnoissance of his pockets, in the vain hope of coming upon some forgotten source of supplies. It has been already mentioned that Gow had moved very rapidly from his quarters in the west end to those in the east end. So rapid indeed had been his flight as to render it impossible for him to remove his luggage, even if his landlady, who had claims upon it for unpaid rent, had permitted it to go. Upon the occasion of his dressing for his wedding, he had been compelled to borrow a morning coat from Dillon in order to make a presentable appearance at the church. In feeling in his pockets he now came to the breast-pocket of this coat, discovered a letter and mechanically brought it to the light of day. To his astonishment it was addressed to himself. He opened it with a trembling hand, and read as follows:

“Dear Gow:

“You have done right for once in your life; from which I argue, as I both hope and pray, that you will *continue* to do right. My poor sister, as you know by experience, is a singular woman. What she intends to do, now she is legally married, God only knows; I confess *I* do not. I shrewdly suspect, however, that for a time at least, she will refuse to have anything whatsoever to do with you; but you can never tell. Assuming my suspicion to be correct, I should for many reasons advise you to leave London for a time. Until, if you will excuse my saying so, you can, morally speaking, pull yourself together again. I know this will require courage, and you will need money to live upon until you find something to do. I enclose three hundred pounds in Bank notes, which please accept as an earnest of my kindly feeling for you, and my hope for your complete rehabilitation. In the meantime I bear no malice against you for the past; but, on the contrary, every hope and wish for the future. Hoping some day to meet again, I am,

“Your brother; not only in law, but in faith, hope and charity;

“P. Dillon.”

To a person who has never experienced an instant transition from despair to hope, it would be time wasted to attempt to describe the effect of these few simple words upon our unfortunate friend Gow. Just as he was about to renounce hope and faith in the existence of one single heart in the wide world that cared for or troubled itself about him, to receive not only such a substantial proof of interest as the neat little package of Bank notes he now had in his hands, but the kindly assurance contained in Dillon's letter, was happiness indeed. It transformed him in an instant from a hopeless, broken man into an alert and enthusiastic one. The immediate effect beyond this was to make him look at his watch: "Twelve thirty," he said to himself joyfully. "Just time for a bite; and then we'll see what's to be done next."

A few steps brought him to Gatti's Restaurant in the Strand. He entered by the Adelaide Street entrance, and sat down and ordered a substantial meal. "The last one in dear old England for many a day!" he said to himself, "so let's make it a good 'un."

After dinner, he changed one of his Bank notes at the desk, liberally tipped the waiter, lighted a good cigar, called a cab, and requested the driver to take him to a gentleman's outfitter he knew of in Oxford Street; where he alighted, entered the place and in a short time returned and re-entered his cab with a porter behind him carrying a very suitable portmanteau and hat-box, which were placed upon the top of the cab, and then Gow asked to be driven to Waterloo Station. As he passed rapidly through the well-known streets of London, he asked himself how long and under what changed conditions of life he should ever see them again. A feeling of profound melancholy took possession of him at first, but which soon gave place to those of bouyancy and hope as he approached the end of his drive to the railway station. In fact, by the time

he had dismissed his cab and taken his ticket for Southampton, he found himself for the first time in years animated not only with hope, but with a certain and well-defined object in life: "By George," he said to himself, "it's worth all it has cost to feel as I do. I'll show my—my wife, and friends yet that I'm not the cad they take me for."

Arriving safely at Southampton, he took a room at Radley's Hotel, intending to remain at that comfortable old house long enough to give him full opportunity to mature his plans. In three days he found himself on one of the fine steamers of the Castle line bound for the diamond fields of South Africa.

* * * * *

Sharnell called that evening at Gow's former lodgings in Cutter Street, only to be informed, with a malicious pleasure which Mrs. Macklin took no trouble to conceal, of the events of the day. She dilated upon the fact of Gow's not only having found Dillon's sister for him, but of his having *married* her. A statement which at first Sharnell absolutely refused to believe; but which the lady triumphantly and conclusively proved by showing him an evening newspaper with an account of the wedding in it. Seeing that all this seemed to infuriate the man, Mrs. Macklin took her cue, and invented a lot of "extra" news, including an account of the splendor of the wedding at St. George's Church, the splendid wedding breakfast at Dillon's home, the large marriage settlement her late lodger had come into, and a hundred and one other details, which, with Gow not there to contradict them, were confirmation strong as proof of holy writ to the already jealous and suspicious Sharnell.

"By God," he muttered to himself, but loud enough for the lady to hear it. "I'll have his blood, or he'll have mine, in the next twenty-four hours."

He left Cutter Street with the firm and unalterable intention of killing his man at sight; an intention there is every reason to believe he would have literally carried out; with the very large "if" he could have found him. But, as the reader is already aware of the reason why he did not and could not find him, it is hardly necessary to point out the fact that he did not succeed in his sanguinary purpose. After hanging around Dunbar's late residence in Portland Place until he was requested to "move on" by the police, he obtained the Eversfield Road address and haunted *that* district for some days to no purpose. Finally, tired of this, he looked up Inspector Evans, and told him that Gow was in town, and not abroad as he, Evans, had supposed; and that it would be a great feather in the Inspector's cap to lay hands upon him; especially so, as he, Sharnell, had had it on very good authority that both Dunbar and his Bank manager, Brown, while not actually looking for Gow, would secretly be very glad to have him arrested and proceeded against by the Government; by this means gratifying their feelings of personal vindictiveness without incurring the obloquy of taking an active part in the prosecution.

It was at this point of the conversation that Inspector Evans exclaimed with an oath that he had seen with his own eyes in the vicinity of Piccadilly Circus only a few days ago, a man whom he could have sworn to be Gow; only, not expecting to see him, and, incidentally having no warrant for his apprehension, he had allowed him to proceed on his way. Now that the steed had been stolen from under his very eyes, so to speak, he set about doing his best to close the stable door; *and*, if possible, to find the missing horse. The same obstacle, however, which had prevented Sharnell's finding him applied in Evans' case; and in a short time both gave up the search and consoled themselves, each in his own manner, for the loss of one of the opportunities of a life-time.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The two villas occupied respectively by the Dunbars and the Dillons would have been described in the local parlance of the day relating to such matters, as "large and commodious dwellings, standing in their own grounds, fitted with all the modern conveniences and improvements and entirely new." These residences adjoined each other, or the grounds did, and the communication between the two families was incessant. There was an air of ease and comfort about both establishments which bore testimony to the good sense and the opulence of each. Dunbar was by this time beginning to thrive as a business man; and now, an opportunity occurring to use capital to advantage in the firm in which he was employed, he frankly communicated the fact to Dillon, who was only too glad to lend him fifty thousand pounds at a low rate of interest with which to purchase a partnership in the concern. So, with moderate wants and an ever-increasing income from his business, Dunbar was not only comfortable, but was in a fair way to become a very rich man in time; and entirely upon his own initiative. Dillon, of course, was already immensely rich, but appeared to be perfectly satisfied to remain for the present in his simple habit of life. As to the two ladies, Helena and Kate, in their several ways they were as happy and contented as possible; and remained the very best of friends. So, take it for all and all, matters were going smoothly and prosperously with the dwellers upon Eversfield Road, Wandsworth.

With the ladies of the Portland Place residence, however, things were not proceeding so well. In the first place, the two young women, Alice and Mary, really estimable and lovable girls, had now been afforded an opportunity to judge for themselves of the man whom they had by force of circumstances come to look upon as an enemy of their household. In other words, owing to the accident described in a former chapter, they had come to know and to respect our friend Patrick Dillon. His gallant bravery, his handsome manly bearing, his strength, his gentleness, and, possibly his wealth, had all had their effect upon these simple-minded girls; in spite of what their mother might say. In fact, the old lady herself had somewhat changed her opinion of the man she had made up her mind must of necessity be a bad man because his interests appeared for the moment to be opposed to her own.

Secondly, with a steadily diminishing income, or in fact, with now no steady income at all, except the two hundred a year already alluded to, the time had come when the expenses of a large establishment had grown to be altogether out of proportion to her means of providing for them. Then, in a general way, there was something uncanny in its effect upon the spirits of the garrison of the beleaguered fortress, the quiet indifference of the enemy. Not for a moment yet had Dillon swerved from his apparent line of tactics. "Let the ladies alone; God bless them," he said, constantly, whenever the subject was raised by any of the Eversfield Road contingent, which was seldom. "Sure, what would you and I be doing with a big house like that on our hands, Kitty? It will be time enough to think of that when the family increases; which it shows no signs of doin' now, me darlin'."

Then he would laugh in his merry way, or wink at his sister, as if to say, "I have a card up my sleeve which I don't mean to play just yet."

And so matters went on, each day making the people in Wandsworth stronger and those in Portland Place weaker, until there came a time when the dowager lady Dunbar could support the financial strain no longer; and she was forced to ask for a parley with the enemy with the avowed purpose of arranging the terms of a capitulation. The letter designed to convey this purpose to the hostile forces was addressed to her son; and ran as follows:

“My dear Pads:

“As you never come to see us at Portland Place any more, thus giving me an opportunity of consulting with you, I take this means of calling to your attention the fact, which I really must say ought to have occurred to you before, that our funds are now absolutely exhausted. A dutiful son, who seems to be able to drive out in his own carriage, as you do, certainly might be expected to protect his old mother and his sisters from such scenes as they are now almost daily subjected to. Only this evening, Jones, the butler, had the impertinence to demand his wages for the twentieth time of late, using very coarse language, and threatening to put an execution in the house if not paid at once. Did you ever hear of such an outrage? Then, William, the coachman, has left us, and the other servants are in as good as an actual state of rebellion; and all over a matter of a few months’ wages. The rates and taxes are also overdue, and the gas and water will soon be shut off from the house, if we can believe the vulgar threats of the men who seem just now to have nothing in the world to do but to annoy us. After the liberal manner in which all these people have been paid in past years by us, it would really appear as if we deserved better treatment at their hands; but such is the gratitude of the present age! In the country, I am informed, matters are even worse than they are here in town. We have not dared to leave this house, as you well know, all summer; and have suffered awfully from the heat and confinement; besides the loneliness of having no one in town to talk to.

“In a word, we really cannot go on as we are doing for another day. You *must* come to see me, and bring your friend Mr. Willon or Dillon, or whatever his name is, to talk matters over. Humiliating as it is to have to discuss such matters with a *perfect stranger*, as well as a person evidently not in

our set, I suppose it will have to be. You or he or *some* one will soon have to find us a roof to live under, as we shall soon lose *this* one, if only *half* the cruel things threatened us begin to take place. Please come at once, you and Mr. Dillon; but on no account any one else. I hope your sense of delicacy will suggest to you the propriety of limiting this conference to as small a number as possible; but then you have acted so strangely of late that I cannot *count* upon anything.

“Your distracted mother.”

Obedient to this summons, Dunbar and Dillon presented themselves at Portland Place at the appointed time, and found Mrs. Dunbar, supported by her two daughters, all in more or less apprehensive states of mind as affected by their individual peculiarities. Color was given to the lady dowager’s mental condition by the request she gave a servant, in a tone of voice quite loud enough for at least one of the gentlemen to overhear it, that the silver on the sideboard in the dining room should be put out of sight. Then, the party being seated, the conference began: “Mr. Dillon,” said the old gentlewoman, in a voice in which she would plead to a highwayman for her life, on Hampstead Heath, “Mr. Dillon, of course you understand that a great deal of the furniture in this house belonged to me long before we ever heard of your claim upon the property. There’s the parlor set, for instance, and the bed-room set in my chamber, and the library table, and the kitchen furniture, and the sil—”

“Don’t take the trouble to make an inventory of it, Madame,” said Dillon, with a bow and a smile which went to the heart of at least one of the ladies present. “The furniture of this house is *all* of it yours; and the house itself, as far as I am concerned, is entirely at your service, as long as your ladyship wishes to remain in it.”

“There,” said Mrs. Dunbar, pettishly, and turning to her son. “There, Pads, what did I tell you? You see, this gentleman doesn’t make any claim after all. What a need-

less fright you gave us. You see, we can remain here just as long as we please, and keep the furniture. Now, if you will be kind enough to ask Mr. Dillon, who seems to be a very nice gentleman, in spite of all you have said about him, for some money; we shall do very well. We can't live here *without money*, you know!"

"I shall ask Mr. Dillon for nothing of the kind, mother; and I'm ashamed of you for suggesting such a thing. Can't you see the delicacy Mr. Dillon has displayed in allowing you and my sisters to remain so long in possession of his property, without trespassing upon his good nature any longer?"

"There you go again!" said Mrs. Dunbar, in a whining tone of voice. "Can't you allow Mr. Dillon to speak for himself in this matter? I'm sure he's quite old enough to have an opinion of his own. Aren't you, Mr. Dillon?"

The last question was addressed to Mr. Dillon in the coquettish manner of a spoilt young lady, who feels she has made a conquest and means to take every advantage of it.

"Of course I am old enough, Mrs. Dunbar," replied Dillon, cheerfully, "but I think your son has your own good at heart, for all that, in advising you to give up an establishment which is perhaps beyond your means of keeping it up. I repeat, however, that as far as I am concerned, you and the young ladies shall remain in undisturbed possession of this house just as long as you wish to."

Here Alice broke in by saying, "Mamma, Pads is perfectly right. Mr. Dillon is, and has been most kind to us; much more so, I'm sure, than we have had any right to expect. His offering us what he does now is only what we might expect of a gentleman of his kindness and delicacy of feeling, and should have the effect upon us of causing us to emulate, rather than to take advantage of his goodness. If you have no pride in this matter, I assure you that both my sister and I *have*; and that we shall not consent to al-

lowing ourselves to be placed in a false light by you any longer."

"Hear, hear," exclaimed Dunbar, jubilantly, while Dillon gave the girl an admiring glance which caused her to blush deeply.

"I really wish you and your sister would hold your tongues," said the old lady, pettishly, "while I am doing everything in my power to keep a roof over our heads as long as I can." Then, turning to Dillon, "I hope you will never know, Mr. Dillon, the pain of having ungrateful children. It often comes to my mind what King Lear said about *his* daughters: 'How like a serpent's sting it is to have a toothless child!' or something to that effect. My dear husband knew Shakespeare almost by heart, while now *I* have not the heart to quote him, even to call attention to how my own children treat me." And here the old lady wept profusely.

"Mother," said Alice, as sternly as a young lady could be expected to speak under such circumstances, "Mary and I have fully discussed this matter between ourselves for a long time past, and it has only been a sense of our duty to you that has restrained us from openly rebelling against your authority long ago. We both of us now absolutely refuse to go on for another moment living upon the sufferance or the kindheartedness of anyone; least of all, a gentleman who has already done so much for us. So, regretfully as I say it, both Mary and I have fully resolved to move from this house at once; and if you remain in it, you must remain alone. My sister and I shall ask Pads to take us to his house to-morrow, that is unless you immediately make arrangements to secure another house and move into it. We have fully made up our minds to this; so there is not the slightest use in trying to shake our determination."

"Well, I'm really ashamed of you," said the old lady,

between her tears. "I really thought I had someone of my children as a champion; but I see I am mistaken. It's really too bad, Mr. Dillon; you see, we have no place to go to, and, of course, a dear, kind gentleman, as you've proved yourself to be, I *can't* help saying *that*, even if Pads *did* give you such a hard name; what was I going to say? Oh, yes, of course, you wouldn't expect us to sleep in the streets, and to store all our fine furniture in the gutter?"

"You shall have all the time you wish for moving, Mrs. Dunbar; and, as for sleeping in the streets, both you and the young ladies are heartily welcome at either your son's or my house, with all your belongings, or with just as many of them as you choose to bring."

The upshot of the meeting was that Dunbar was authorized to select and lease a house suitable to his mother's and his sisters' wants, and, as soon as this was done to notify them, so that the process of moving from the larger into the smaller establishment might begin at once. In the meantime, he insisted upon paying off all the accumulated bills for servants' wages and other household matters, so as to relieve the ladies from their most pressing embarrassments. Both Dillon and Dunbar offered their houses as temporary residences during the move, and Mrs. Dunbar was left absolutely free to take such furniture from both the town and country houses as she should see fit. Both Dunbar and his sister vigorously protested against this; but here Dillon was immovable. "The lady Dunbar shall have every stick of furniture in both houses, and welcome; giving her all the time she requires in which to remove it," he said, in a voice and manner so determined that everyone saw the hopelessness of any appeal against his decision.

So, the young men took their departure; and the next day Dunbar went to work to find a house for his mother

and sisters. There being still another new vacant house near their own in Wandsworth, it was secured; and in a few weeks time, the ladies moved into their new quarters with all their belongings; formally giving possession of both the Portland Place house and the Devonshire estate to Dillon; and thus ended a piece of business which might easily have taken an unpleasant turn, to the apparent satisfaction of all concerned.

This important matter disposed of, a certain mystery began to attend all of young Dillon's movements. The three families, for instance, now being close neighbors, it would have been quite the natural thing for the Dillons to have called upon the newcomers, after having allowed sufficient time to elapse for them to settle themselves comfortably. But the Dillons did nothing of the kind. Beyond a rather formal but kindly note requesting to be informed if they could be of any service to them, both he and his sister kept themselves absolutely to themselves. Then, again, the Dillons, having finally come into the full possession of their estates, it would have been natural for them, it would appear, to at once move into their grand houses and change their manner of living accordingly. The Dillons did neither the one nor the other. They remained where they were and as they were. The house in Portland Place after being thoroughly cleaned, furbished up and refurnished, where the depredations of Mrs. Dunbar had made it necessary, was placed in the charge of a reliable caretaker; but remained otherwise closed. The country place the same.

As far as anyone in a position to judge could have observed, the Dillons preferred the quiet simple lives they were living; and could by no means be induced to give them up. It might have been assumed by the same person, the one in a position to judge, that one or the other of the Dillons, either Patrick or Kate, had some purpose

to serve in remaining as they were. As Kate was married, it narrowed itself down to Patrick, and the object or the purpose might easily have been assumed to be one of the young ladies at the lady Dunbar's new home. Plausible as this theory might appear, however, there was not one particle of tangible evidence to be deduced from young Dillon's actions in support of it. He simply went on exactly as he had done before the arrival of the elder branch of the Dunbar family; and, whatever his designs or his feelings were, he kept them absolutely to himself. He continued to be the same quiet, unostentatious person he had always been; the same kindly neighbor and friend to the younger Dunbars, the same devoted brother to Kate; but this was all. The young ladies, or the old one, for the matter of that, of the new household, seemed to be utterly outside of and beyond his range of vision.

And so matters went on, from month to month, with very little change; until, in fact, the curiosity of several of our little community began to be visibly excited. As has been observed before, in this little volume, we change our relative positions towards our fellow men very rapidly and unconsciously in the complex ramifications of our modern life. Observe, as an illustration, the changes that had already taken place in the relations between the Dillons and the Dunbars since first the latter came upon the stage of our drama. Owing to an apparently slight cause, the transfer of an estate from one to the other of these families, from the Dunbars having been in the ascendant, the Dillons had come to be so. Only a few years ago, the Dillons relatively to the Dunbars had been almost savages in a savage country; now, by the turn of a hand, by the possession of a little money, they dominated them; and seemed likely to continue to do so until the next turn of the wheel of fate!

It is extremely probable that Dillon was availing him-

self of one of the great advantages of being rich; namely, the ability to bide his time. Whatever his intentions were, he had provisions and ammunition in plenty to tire or to starve out the besieged party, against whom his purpose was directed, whomsoever it was. He was gaining daily in strength, in manners, in dignity; in the nameless charm which the possession of great wealth has ever and will ever throw about a man. One evening, as he and Kate were alone together, he said: "Kitty, darlin, what would ye say if some of these days I brought home a wife?"

"I should say it would be the best thing in the world for you to do, Pat," answered Kate.

"D'you mean it, Kitty, or is it to oblige me ye say that?"

"I really mean it, Pat. I assure you I do."

"Then its tired ye're gettin of me, Kitty?"

"No, Pat, not tired; but I think you'd make a good husband. You'd make a good woman happy."

"Yes, Kitty, but how about yourself; should I make *you* unhappy? That's the question."

"Not at all, Pat; and as I think I know who the lady is, I wish to say I highly approve of her. Sure, its Alice Dunbar, Pat; and a good girl she is when left to herself."

"Yes, Kitty darlin; but she won't be left to herself. The old lady, her mother, will always be hovering about; and, until she changes her tune towards you, Kitty, she'll never enter this house with my consent."

"If that's all that stands in your way, Pat, dear, don't let it stand any longer. If you'll tame the young lady, I'll undertake to tame the old one. I've watched you for a long time, Pat, and your tactics are working splendidly; let alone mine. The young ladies are not only respectful to me now when we meet, they are kind. As to the *old* lady, I rarely meet her, as she keeps to the house; but,

one thing is certain, Pat, and that is that they are *all* dying of curiosity to know what we are thinking about."

"D'ye think so, Kitty?"

"Indeed I do, Pat, I *know* it."

"But what's your ividence, Kitty?"

"Oh, trust a woman to know what's going on in another woman's mind, Pat. Those ladies, all of them, expected we were going to call upon them as soon as they got settled; to call in grand style, Pat, in order to show off our superiority after coming into our own. They were all ready to receive us with a haughty stiffness in order to keep us in our places. When we did not come, Pat, at first they were astonished, and then annoyed. Since then, they have been *both*; and curious, besides."

"D'ye think so, Kitty?"

"Indeed I do, Pat; and, more than that, I think one of the young ladies, I needn't tell you which for you know well enough already, is cruelly grieved by this time that you take as little notice of her as you do."

"Really, Kitty?"

"Yes, and as she's really a fine girl, Pat, take my advice and don't let her slip through your hands. Girls sometimes marry from pique, you know."

"So I've heard, Kitty."

"Well, then, be warned in time. Don't wait too long. The game you've played so far has been well played. The effect has been good. Don't spoil it by overdoing, Pat; that's all."

"I'm thinkin the same, Kitty darlin. So, I'll tell ye what to do: Just give it out to Helena that your brother is thinkin sariously of marryin. This'll be sure to go straight to the place where it will do the most good. Lave the rest to me, Kitty."

It is needless to say that this request was immediately carried out by Kate, with a result that the older branch of

the Dunbar family heard of it in due time. "Well, said the lady dowager, "I suppose it's only natural that the man should marry. It's a thing common people like him do every day."

"He's not so common, after all," said Alice Dunbar, with asperity. "Did Helena say who the lady was, mamma?"

"No, my child; she only said that she had had it from good authority that Mr. Dillon intended to marry soon; that's all. I suppose it'll be the daughter of some wealthy tradesman."

"I don't know about that, mother. Mr. Dillon is a gentleman, every inch of him, and worthy of as good a woman as he is a man."

"Which means you'd like him for yourself, perhaps, my dear?"

"I only hope I shall do half as well."

"I'm ashamed to hear you say so, Alice, although I must say the man's improved vastly in style and manner since he's come into his money. Perhaps on the whole you might have done worse, after all."

"It doesn't appear to be a matter of better or worse, mamma; if he's going to marry someone else, as you say he is; so there's nothing more to be said about it."

Although Alice probably meant exactly what she said, she went on *thinking* about it, without a doubt; as she had a perfect right to do. And now, by a curious fatality, the two young people kept running into each other as frequently, and with apparently as little intention as they had avoided doing up to this time. Wandsworth common was near at hand, and, as the season was Autumn and the heather was in bloom, Alice had taken a great fancy to strolling into this large open space; sometimes walking about, and sometimes sitting upon one of the benches the place afforded. One evening, not long after the news of young Dillon's matrimonial intentions had reached her

ear, Alice was sitting quietly in the park engaged too deeply in her own thoughts, beyond a doubt, to notice the erect form of a young man seated on a bench nearby. The shades of evening had begun to draw in, and the gloaming, so suggestive to lonely hearts of home and fire-side and companionship, was at hand. Perhaps this circumstance prevented Alice from seeing the young man, or, if not prevented, made it possible for her to see him and to unconsciously merge him into the setting of the scene which was being enacted in her mind.

However it was, or however long this situation of affairs might have continued, if left to itself, young Dillon was the first to break the spell and to attempt to establish a connection between their two spheres of consciousness. The first thing Alice knew, the young man was standing before her, his hat in his hand, after a respectful salutation, in which interest, mirth and seriousness were combined in about equal proportions. Possibly, if a fourth quality was to be noticed, it would have taken the form of determination; for certain it was that Dillon, both in appearance and in his bearing, suggested to the mind of the observer a man bent upon the accomplishment of a fixed purpose, and animated by an intention to do or die in attaining it. There was a noticeable awkwardness in his manner of approach, it was true; but it was of the dangerous and determined kind which is said to make an unskilful swordsman quite as dangerous as a skilful one; only supposing the former to be thoroughly aroused and bent upon mischief. Such, in a word, was the impression the young man's attitude made upon Alice; heightened, undoubtedly, by what she had already both seen and heard of him. "Miss Dunbar," he said, with a smile, "would you grant me the favor of a few words with you, a few words I have been endeavoring to find an opportunity to say for some time?"

Before the young lady could by any possibility find time to answer, Dillon had seated himself beside her on the bench. Position is everything in planning an assault. Dillon had secured his position, and it was a good one. Then, evidently assuming an affirmative answer to his request, he began at once to say what he had to say; thus giving her really no time in which to hesitate, or to refuse. "Miss Dunbar," he went on, "You must excuse an uncouth western boy's lack of manners. You see, we really have very little time to acquire the polish that your kind of life requires of you. When we untutored savages have anything to say, or when we see anything we want, we are like children; we speak up naturally and without the restraint which the conventionality of your kind of life would demand. This must be my apology, Miss Dunbar, for speaking and acting as I do; I have something to say, and I *want* something. So, please listen, and don't be offended."

There was a quality in the young man's voice and manner, as he said this, which disarmed any possible suspicion as to the highmindedness of his intentions. He was respectful without being servile, enthusiastic without in the least losing control of himself, firm without being aggressive; but, above all, there was that invincible lightheartedness and indifference to results which carries a man successfully through all kinds of dangers and difficulties. There was also a tone of command in his attitude which could by no means have escaped the observation of the person to whom he was addressing himself, be it man or woman. "Now, Miss Dunbar," he went on, "fate has a good deal to do with the direction of our lives, after all. Fate has brought about changes in your and in my life in the past few months which would seem impossible if they were not actually true, as both you and I know them to be. Who could have foreseen a year ago, when I was

some thousands of miles away from here and had never even heard of your existence, that we should be sitting together in this place with our destinies already pretty closely connected, and, I trust to be still more so?"

Alice gave a rather startled look now, as Dillon began to give pretty certain indications as to whither his remarks were tending; but he gave her a reassuring look, and went on: "You see, Miss Dunbar, with no possible intention on my part, I have been the cause of great changes in your life and that of your family. It is of very little use to tell you how much I regret all this; but I *do* regret it, just the same. It has been by no means a pleasant thing for me to become rich by making your family poor; but that is what I have done. My regret would have been much less keen if I had had men alone to deal with in this matter; but here again I had no choice. A man, when adversity overtakes him, can cope with the world; and often is the better for it. It's a different thing altogether with women, and especially women brought up to luxury; as you and yours have been. Now, Miss Dunbar, far from supposing for a moment that I have anything worth considering to offer you in return for all the loss I have put you to, I know only too well how a woman of your personal dignity would resent the mere mention of such a thing. Even to have refused to accept the estate which by an accident has become legally mine, or now, having accepted it, to offer to return it to you, would, from your point of view, I can well understand be equally insulting. There is one, thing, however, that I can do, that any man in this world can do, and which no one can prevent his doing; I can feel for, I can respect, I can *love* the woman I have injured! Whether or no I have any chance of winning her love in return, or whether I shall offend by declaring my love, is a matter which rests with her alone. There can be no real offence, however, where none is intended;

and there are situations in life, when, from the nature of the case itself, a frank declaration like mine, even if refused, can by no means be construed into an offence by the person to whom it is addressed. So, now, Miss Dunbar, I have the honor to offer you my love, my respect, my duty and my fortune; not in return for what I have been the means of depriving you of, but because, whatever had been our relative positions in life, I should have loved, respected and honored you for yourself; and yourself alone."

"But I have been only lately informed that you had already made a marriage for yourself, Mr. Dillon."

"You were correctly informed, Miss Dunbar."

"But how does this statement agree with your proposal to me?"

"Simply because *you* were the lady of my choice, Miss Dunbar; that's all."

"That was assuming a good deal, it strikes me, Mr. Dillon; much more than I am inclined to overlook. A woman doesn't care to be disposed of without her knowledge or consent."

"I am aware of that, Miss Dunbar; and that was my reason for not mentioning the lady's name to anyone but yourself. It is true, perfectly true, that I have been contemplating marriage for some time. I shall go on contemplating it until I actually accomplish it, and I shall never marry anyone but yourself; so, the sooner you give your consent, the sooner you'll get me out of the bad habit I've fallen into to wanting to marry above my station in life; which I believe is a serious offence in itself in this country."

"But I shall have to obtain the consent of my family, Mr. Dillon; and I fear there will be opposition. I *know* there will be on the part of my mother."

"I have already obtained the full approval of your

brother, Miss Dunbar; who is, I believe, the head of the family. If he has carried out his promise to me, he has by this time spoken of the matter to your mother, and obtained her *formal* consent to our union, if not her unqualified approval. That leaves only your sister to be disposed of, Miss Dunbar; and, of course, yourself."

"Well, as so many of my family appear to have settled the matter for me, I should be obstinate indeed to hold out; and now, in consenting, I tell you frankly I only follow out the dictates of my own heart, for I have loved you since first we met!"

And now the shadows of the night having gathered in sufficiently to make the proceeding a perfectly safe and proper one, the young people drew close together, exchanged a kiss, and sat long into the night entwined in each others' arms!

CHAPTER XXV.

Some six or seven years after the events narrated in the preceding chapters, a four-wheeler drove up to the Metropole Hotel in Northumberland Avenue, one day, with a rather heavy top-hamper of luggage; a gentleman of distinguished appearance alighted, and having requested the uniformed head porter of the hotel to pay his cab fare and look after his luggage; entered, and registering himself at the clerk's office, asked for a comfortable suite of rooms with all the air of a man accustomed not only to good living but to being promptly and respectfully waited upon. Having been obsequiously shown to his apartments and his luggage also having been safely stowed, the gentleman proceeded to make himself comfortable. That is to say, he got into a comfortable smoking jacket, lighted a cigar and ensconced himself in an easy chair. "Dear old England, again!" he said to himself, "and how precisely it looks as I left it years ago. Same old London, same old fog, same old faces about, grown a little older, same old bustle, griminess, dulness, same old smallness, bigness and all the other contrarities; *but*, the same dear old England we all love to return to after an absence and to find just as we left it. No other place like it in the world for *that*. And now, let us see. What's the first thing to be done? Ah yes, the bills."

At this our friend rang for writing materials, and, after a long and somewhat painful reflection, if the thoughtful

expression of his face could be relied upon as an indication, wrote as follows:

"My dear Dunbar:

"Some years ago you paid some bills you should not have been called upon to pay. I should have paid them, and not you. I am in funds, and should very much like to discharge my conscience of a burden it has carried for a long, long time. If you will do me the favor, therefore, to reckon up the amount due you, with interest to date, on those acceptances, I will gladly remit the amount; and then, if you will, you may return me the bills to my hotel. You will confer a favor upon me if you will not mention having heard from me, except to Dillon, to whom I am writing by the same mail as the one by which you will receive this. As Her Majesty has honored me by adding a handle to my name in recognition of some trifling service I was in a position to render lately in South Africa, you may address me now as *Sir* Sidney Gow.

"Yours sincerely,

"S. G."

The other letter was addressed to Patrick Dillon, Esq., and ran:

"My dear Dillon:

"Inclosed I beg to hand you Bank of England Notes for £300, the amount of a loan you were good enough to make me some years ago; and which was of inestimable value to me at the time. Thanking you with all my heart for your kindness, I beg to remain,

"Yours faithfully,

"SIDNEY GOW."

"There," he said to himself, as he rang for the waiter to post his letters, "I am glad to have *those* worries off my mind."

Then he settled down again to resume his interrupted lucubrations. "And now, what next?" he asked himself. "Of course both Dunbar and Dillon will tell all the others of my return to England. I never knew either man or woman who could keep a secret of that kind to themselves. In fact its one of the kind you request a person to keep

just *because* you want it told in certain quarters. Well, it will be told anyway; the newspapers will never let me alone, to begin with. The arrival of Sir Sidney Gow in London, after "his brilliant and distinguished career in the service of his country," *plus* a fine fortune picked up in the gold fields, will be nuts for the reporters. Let it be so. I can't truly say I object, because I don't. It's a long way better to return as I do than to have left as I did. There can be no possible doubt about *that*. And then Kate. Ah, that's another matter altogether. Let me see; I've thought that matter over so much during the past years and turned and twisted it into so many shapes that I scarcely know where I left it. Her last words as we stood on the church porch were, as I recollect them, "I shall never trouble you, nor expect you to trouble me." That was a pretty straight tip. There was no misunderstanding it, nor getting away from it. I was to make an honest woman of her by keeping my promise to her; that was all that was expected of me. There was neither love nor regret in her eyes as I saw them last; but then why should there have been? I had treated her like a dog; worse than a dog. And how is it now? Has she changed in her feelings towards me as I have changed? If so, how can I best find it out without humiliating myself? Sir Sidney Gow, with a fine fortune, a brilliant record behind him and a future before him, is a very different person from the poor, hunted Sidney Gow who was glad enough to slink out of London upon almost any terms seven years ago. I love her now, curiously enough; now that I can't have her. She is a proud woman; she will never give any sign. The approach will have to be made by me, if it is made at all; and, if she is of the same mind as when last I saw her, there will be very little hope of a reconciliation, very little indeed. And yet, something must be done. I am legally bound to her for life, and she to me. We are both young, and, in the course

of events destined for long lives; long, lonely lives, if we remain apart. It might be all so different if I only knew what was going on in her mind. Ah, that's the question, to find out."

And then Sir Sidney lapsed into a brown study, and puffed away at his cigar. The next day, instead of a letter, he received a visit from Dunbar. The little matter of the bills was soon arranged between them, by Gow's giving a cheque upon his bankers for the full amount, with interest added to date; the latter in the face of Dunbar's vigorous protest. This matter disposed of, the two men lapsed into a rather awkward silence for a while. Doubtless during it a good many unpleasant memories came to the minds of both of them. "And what are your plans now, Sir Sidney?" finally asked Dunbar.

"I really have none, Dunbar," he answered rather sadly. "I am in rather a singular position, you see. I am still young, and yet I've already got what most men far older than I find themselves striving for. I happened by the merest chance to arrive in South Africa at a time when fortunes were rapidly and easily made there. Then the troubles in the Transvaal came on, and I was fortunate enough to be able to render some service to her Majesty, and she gave me a title. There really isn't much more than those two things in the world for an Englishman to live for, now is there?"

"Um, I don't know about *that*, Sir Sidney."

"For you, yes; but for me, no."

Both men recognized the fact that they were at the edge of a difficult and dangerous subject, and lapsed into silence again. Suddenly an idea seemed to strike Gow, as a look of interest came into his face quite at variance with his apparent mental attitude up to this time. "Dunbar," he said, earnestly, "you and I have been old friends; and now, I having in a measure repaired any wrong I may have done

you, I trust we are friends again. Why should I not come to you for advice in the matter which is at present nearest my heart?"

"There is *no* reason, my dear Gow," responded Dunbar, heartily. "I shall be only too glad to assist you in any way I can; so what is it?"

"I wish to ascertain my wife's feeling for me, Dunbar. How should I go about it to the best advantage. To start with, have *you* any idea how she is disposed towards me?"

"No, my dear friend, I have not. Your wife, now lady Sidney Gow, is a singular woman; and no less singular now than formerly. She gives very little clue to her real state of mind by any outward demonstration, as you well know."

"Is she aware that I am in England?"

"Yes; the papers were full of news concerning you this morning. You requested me to say nothing to anyone about your arrival, and I followed your instructions implicitly. But, I could hardly sequester the morning papers from my family, you know; and it would have been worse than useless to try."

"Yes, I see. Well, how do they take the news?"

"I can answer for all but the person you are most interested in. All the rest are simply delighted, and begged me to offer you their most sincere felicitations; which I do."

"And my wife?"

"It is impossible to tell. I watched the expression of her face closely; but, beyond a slightly heightened color and a quickening of her breath, no one could have detected a sign of any kind. Naturally, we could hardly discuss the subject in her presence unless she gave us some encouragement to do so, which she did not. My wife, Helena, tried to get some expression of feeling from lady Sidney when they were alone, but utterly failed. And so the

matter stands at present. I wish I could report differently; but I can't."

"Thank you, Dunbar. I appreciate your frankness and your delicacy."

There was another pause, during which each of the men was evidently thinking things he did not care to say to the other. To put a proud man in the humiliating position of being compelled to prove that he is worthy to consort with his wife is *one* thing; to discuss it is quite another. With the very best intentions in the world, Dunbar was neither in a position to offer his friend advice, nor to give him information. While, as to Gow, he could with the greatest difficulty bring himself to the point of even alluding in the vaguest manner to the relations, or rather the lack of relations existing between himself and his wife; let alone going into details or placing himself in the position of soliciting that which he was legally, at least, in a position to demand. So, the conversation having reached a point where it was difficult to go any farther, Dunbar took his leave.

Later in the day Dillon called; but with him it was still more difficult to speak frankly than with Dunbar. A man might come to forgive the woman he had married at the point of a pistol, nay, as in Gow's case, he might even come to love her; but to ever come to feeling entirely at ease in the company of the man who had held the pistol, *that* was a little more than could be expected. So, Dillon having welcomed his brother-in-law back to England, and complimented him upon his success in the world, discreetly allowed all other matters to take care of themselves. He did, however, speak of his own marriage to Alice Dunbar, which had taken place during Gow's absence, and of Dunbar's astounding success as a business man, and of his rapidly increasing wealth: "He's a richer man than I am now, by the powers"; he said, "and there's no knowing

where it'll all end. Then his wife's property in the States had risen tremendously; so she's rich in her own right, God bless her. And now you're a baronet, and rich into the bargain"; Dillon went on, cheerily, "and poor Kate is lady Gow. Well, well, who'd 'a thought it, seven years ago?"

All this was very well; but it didn't serve to change the viewpoint very much of a lonely man sick and tired of wandering, and anxious for home and rest and family and the love of his wife. Still, it was perhaps all he could expect, and he had to make the best of it. In the course of the conversation he had gained several other items of information besides those already mentioned. For instance, he had found out that after living several years at Wandsworth, in simple, unostentatious style, until in fact Dunbar had become a rich man as the result of his own endeavors, the latter had repurchased from Dillon his former residence in Portland Place and his country place in Devonshire. Dillon had bought a fine house near Dunbar's, and the two families had finally moved into their respective homes. Dunbar and Helena, and by this time three children, constituting one family, Dillon, Alice, his wife, and the lady dowager Dunbar and Mary the other. This left Mrs., now lady Gow, to be accounted for; and it was her determined obstinacy in refusing to move that had deterred the others from doing so for a long time. Both families, Dillon's and Dunbar's, had begged her to make her home with them; but she had persistently and pointedly declined. "My own little home is quite good enough for me," she always said in answer to such invitations. "I have no desire for fashionable life, and I should only be in the way in a family that has. So, let me alone, and don't make me uncomfortable by feeling that I am a dog in the manger; as I certainly shall if you remain here in Wandsworth any longer on my account."

As Kate was now a rich woman in her own right, Dillon having insisted upon dividing his inheritance with her, there was no real reason why she should not live as she pleased, and a good many real ones why she should. So, finally, it was arranged that Kate, with a trusty man servant or two to protect her and several maid servants to wait upon her, should remain as she was; that is the sole tenant of a very comfortable and roomy house in the suburbs, with a tidy bit of ground about it, and everything anyone could really desire in the way of creature comforts. Here she took to reading, caring for her garden, visiting a few people in distress, and, in a word, leading her own life in her own way, unmolested and unwilling to be molested by the world. She never referred, even to her brother, to her past history or to her future plans. She appeared to be strong enough to stand alone; and, as she insisted upon doing so, there was nothing to be said or done to prevent her.

All this had been dropped by Dillon in a cheery, off-hand manner during his conversation with Gow; possibly with some intention of answering questions before they were asked, and, possibly, with no intention at all; but, in any case, in a friendly, kindly manner, which went far towards soothing whatever bitterness there might be remaining between the two men, and laying a foundation for a real and lasting friendship in the future. In taking his departure, Dillon had warmly pressed his brother-in-law's hand, and invited him cordially in his own and his wife's name to visit them at their home. Dunbar had extended the same hospitality; but Gow had rather pointedly declined it in both instances. "No," he said to himself, when alone, "I'll be accepted by the whole family, or by no part of it. A pretty figure I should cut hanging about either Dunbar's or Dillon's house on sufferance, or as if I were trying to get at my wife through their intercession. No

fear. Lady Gow and I will make it up between us first, or we'll find we can't make it up; and then it will be time enough to see about the others!"

So Gow drew within himself and quietly awaited events. He occupied and amused himself as best he could in the meantime. For one thing, he requested lord Vennor to call upon him at his apartments for the purpose of removing his name from the bills he, Gow, had paid, and of seeing them finally disposed of by being reduced to ashes. As Vennor had had half of the proceeds of these bills as a compensation for having had them discounted, this action of Gow's in releasing his name and destroying the bills without asking him for the return of a penny struck Vennor as being particularly magnanimous: with a result that the old friendship between the men, interrupted as has been seen in a former chapter, was renewed; and his lordship became a constant visitor at his rooms.

This was about the position of affairs when one evening, in response to a knock on his door, a waiter entered and informed Gow that a man was waiting to see him down stairs who refused to send up his name, but who said his business was important. Gow requested the waiter to show the man up; and, in a few moments his old friend, Sharnell, dirtier, shabbier and older than he had last seen him, entered the apartment. He looked about the luxuriously furnished room with a half-sneering, half incredulous expression, as if both doubting the evidence of his senses and yet envying the man who could furnish such evidence. "Seems to me you've got up a peg or two in the world, Gow, since we last met," said the man in a surley tone as he helped himself unasked to a chair, and laid his shabby hat upon the table.

"Sir Sidney Gow, if you please, my friend," said Gow, quietly, "and now will you kindly state your business as

speedily as possible, and then relieve me from your presence; as I have other matters to attend to."

Sharnell's answer was to coolly take a very disreputable brierwood pipe from his pocket, fill it with tobacco, light it and begin to smoke. "I shall state my business just as soon and no sooner than I find it convenient to do so, *Gow*," he said in an angry voice. As Gow was smoking at the time himself, he could hardly object to this; and then, having fully expected to run against this man, he had considered it prudent to let him have his say and be done with it. After a short pause, during which Sharnell glared at Gow, while the latter assumed an attitude of utter indifference mingled with resignation, the man began: "I suppose all this 'Sir Sidney Gow' business, and this puttin' up at a first-class hotel will deceive some of your old friends, but it won't go down with me."

"Ah?" said Gow.

"No, not by a damned sight. Its a plant, pure and simple, to get some fool who don't know you as well as *I* do, on toast; but, one thing is sure, and that is that you can't stop here even for a few weeks, as you've been doin', on wind. There must be *some* money flyin' about. So, I'll trouble you for a loan of, well, say twenty pounds, 'Sir Sidney,' if you please; just as a starter. A man with a 'Sir' attached to his name certainly ought to have twenty pounds about him at any time."

"Yes, I think I have as much as that," said Gow, modestly taking a package of crisp Bank of England notes from his wallet, which must have run into several hundred pounds. "Yes, I'm *sure* I have twenty pounds. What then?"

"What then? damn you, do you think you can flash money in my face like that, you jail bird? Hand me those notes, all of them, at once; or, by God, I'll put you in a place

where they'll do you but little good for seven or eight years at least. Hand 'em over, d'ye hear?"

"Yes, I hear, and I refuse to do anything of the kind. And now, sir, if that is all your business, kindly take yourself off; if not, state the rest of it in as few words as possible, and then go."

"What, you refuse? Where's my share of the spoils in that Dillon matter, I'd like to know? I hear you've married his sister. Where do I come in on that deal?"

"I really don't know."

"You don't know, and yet you left me in the lurch some six or seven years ago after a solemn agreement to divide with me, and now you return apparently at least, rollin' in wealth. Where did you get it?"

"That is none of *your* business, sir, and I requested you to state your own business, and not mine."

"Do you recollect what I said I'd do to you, you dog?" asked the man, working himself into a towering passion.

"I am not here to answer foolish questions, my man," said Gow, sternly, and rising from his chair, "if this is all you have to say, leave the room at once; or I ring the bell to have you ejected from the hotel."

"Ring, if you dare; damn you."

Gow's answer was to push the electric bell, and to quietly remain standing while awaiting the answer. This proceeding evidently was a surprise to Sharnell and disconcerted him. "Come," he said, in a half, conciliatory manner, "come, Gow, you know this isn't a square deal. You certainly have made something out of this Dillon matter. Give me a couple of hundred pounds and I'll call it square. Come, now."

"I shall not give you one cent. You are a blackmailer, a bully and a thief. I owe you nothing, and have never profited to the extent of a penny through my dealing with you. So, leave my apartment, at once, and never dare to

enter it again; for, if you do, I'll have you pitched into the street."

"Give me a hundred, then. I'm really 'ard up, and need it. Give me a hun—"

At this moment approaching footsteps were heard in the passage outside. Gow was half inclined to give the man a hundred pounds to be quit of him, but restrained the impulse. A somewhat extensive experience with just such people as Sharnell in the past had taught him that the least evidence of fear or weakness in a blackmailing case like the present one was fatal. He must stand his ground or he would furnish ground for his enemy to stand upon, and very much to his own cost. "I shall not give you one cent, as I told you before; now go!"

"And, by God, I'll follow you to the ends of the earth until I kill you, you dog; and don't you think I won't."

In the middle of this sentence the door of the apartment had opened and lord Vennor, followed by the waiter had entered the room, although Sharnell in the fury he had attained had evidently not heard them. Gow nodded to Vennor, and then said to the waiter: "Waiter, show this man to the door, and request the hall porter, if he ever comes here to annoy me again, to hand him over to the police. I will make a charge against him."

Then, turning to Vennor he said: "My lord, kindly take a good look at this man's face, so as to be able to identify him again in case of need. He has been attempting to blackmail me, and has ended by threatening my life. If anything happens to me, you will know who is responsible for it."

By this time, Sharnell had considered it the part of prudence to retire, which he did in tolerably good order, considering the decisive defeat he had encountered; and Sir Sidney and his friend were left alone in the apartment.

CHAPTER XXVI.

And so matters went on for some weeks, Gow each day becoming more enthusiastically in love with his wife, but also each day becoming more despondent of his ultimate success in winning her. From both Dunbar and Dillon he occasionally heard of her as apparently, if not happy, at least, contented; and as keeping herself fully occupied in the direction of her household affairs, her reading, and probably her charities; as of late she had been a good deal away from home. She never either questioned or allowed herself to be questioned in regard to any matters connected howsoever remotely with her relations with Gow. The subject of her past life and of her marriage had long been dropped as far as any discussion of it was concerned when she was present, and she was not a woman whom anyone cared to rouse from the calm state of mind she now seemed to be in. Shortly after Alice's marriage with Dillon, there had been an encounter between Kate and the lady dowager Dunbar, in which the latter had for once more than found her match. Kate had evidently made up her mind that, in view of the close relationship which was about to be established between them by this marriage, it would be well for her to settle for once and all the exact limit of her endurance of lady Dunbar's peculiar tactics as far as they related to herself. Carrying out this determination she had calmly waited for an occasion to arise when the customary abuse of the older woman had reached a point when it would be folly to stand it any

longer, and then, from the vantage ground of a long and patient self-restraint, she had opened her batteries upon her. She had selected an opportunity for doing this after the marriage had been celebrated, so that her action could in no wise affect it, and, also, when pretty much all the members of both families were present to witness the engagement. It ended in an unqualified defeat, an utter rout, in fact, of the forces under command of the lady dowager; as Kate had evidently intended it should do from the start. Dillon, who naturally enough, knew something of the possibilities of his sister's temper, when fully aroused, admitted that he had never for a moment dreamt of the apparently unlimited resources of arms and equipment she showed herself to be possessed of upon this memorable occasion. The old lady, who evidently felt she had a reputation to sustain as a warrior and an old campaigner, had put forth all her powers at the beginning of the battle; but, before it was half over, she struck her colors, never to be hoisted again; for they never were. The disastrous defeat, however, broke the old lady's spirit; and she was never the same person after it. She had met her master for the first time in her life, and life seemed to possess very little attraction for her afterwards. She lived long enough to make herself thoroughly uncomfortable to the persons immediately about her, but to none others, for some years, and then she died; lamented about as much as she deserved to be. Kate, after her victory, never was called upon to assert herself again. She had shown what she could do, and that was enough.

So Gow occupied himself as well as he could with his affairs, spent some of his time at his club and in calling upon a few of his former friends who were now glad to renew acquaintance with him in his prosperity; but, in spite of all he could do he was restless and unhappy. His wealth and position were as nought to him compared with the

possibilities of a happy home life, a haven of rest after his long and arduous wanderings. The time was winter, and the usual fog hung over London. This fact, possibly, added weight to the already heavy burden of loneliness he was called upon to bear. The fog had its advantages, however; for, under its cover and the protection of a slightly changed cut of his beard, he occasionally ventured upon a lonely walk to Wandsworth; where, having ascertained the location of his wife's residence, he would walk up and down the street before it long into the night, wondering what Kate was doing inside. Sometimes he would see her shadow outlined upon the closed window shades as she rose from her chair and crossed the room upon some errand. What was she thinking about? Did a thought of *him* have a dwelling place in her mind? Was there anything in the so-called telepathy by which he could establish a connection between their minds? He would try the experiment, at least, and *will* that she should receive and answer the message of love and contrition he sent her from the very bottom of his heart. But no answer came of any kind. At times he would wait until his wife retired for the night; watch the lights as they were extinguished, one by one in the lower rooms of the house, and then see a light appear in the room in the upper story which he assumed to be her's. There he would see her figure outlined again on the window shade, partly undressed, as she prepared herself for the night. Then he would picture to himself all the sweet and sacred rights which a happy marriage gave a man relatively to his wife. The delight of the close companionship of married life with a beautiful and charming woman. The warmth and glow of the cosy library fireside, the uninterrupted *tete-a-tete* in the bedroom as, while retiring for the night, they discussed all kinds of matters interesting to themselves with a freedom and abandon which marriage alone can give. The feeling of proprietorship a man

has in his wife never comes to him so strongly as when for any reason he has lost or forfeited it. When all is well between them, there is so much above and beyond this feeling of ownership that it is in a measure merged and partially lost in other things; but it is safe to say that a woman's love of all the treasures in this world is the one a man is willing to take, or at any rate, *does* take the greatest chances of losing, when he has it; and regrets the most when he has lost it! It was certainly so with Gow. When he had possessed his wife's love he had despised it and allowed it to become lost to him. Now, all had changed. The kisses which had been so cheap and so plentiful then, had become the costliest, the rarest, the most desired things in the world; the fragrance of her hair and body sweeter than violets! Her smile, more precious than rubies.

And so the poor homeless wanderer would pace up and down for hours at a time during the night watches before the home which should have been his own, but for his folly. Sometimes a feeling of open rebellion would enter his heart. "She is *my* wife," he would say to himself, "and I'll go to her and claim her, *vi et armis*. What right has she to ignore me the way she does, and to keep me out of the house I have as much right as she to enter?"

Then his pride would step in and suggest that a woman who had to be bullied into loving her husband would hardly love him in the manner that he, sir Sidney Gow, wished to be loved. Then again, there was the consciousness of his own failure to comprehend his wife, arising partly out of the difference of sex, but more particularly in his case, the difference of nationality between himself and his wife. His conception of the rights of a British husband, he well knew by what he had seen, not only of his wife but of his wife's brother, would go but a very short way in asserting themselves in this case. From what he had seen of

her personal courage, her indefatigable perseverance in the pursuit of any object she had set before her as worthy of accomplishment, her utter disregard of all the conventionalities of life, when a matter of principle was involved, he well knew he should make but little headway in the direction of *compelling* his wife to any course of action whatever. So, he would drop all these ideas as impracticable, and as unworthy of his dignity as a man; and go on in his hopeless pursuit of his lost happiness, pitying himself intensely, and viewing himself a good deal in the light of an injured man and a martyr; as men in his position are wont to do.

And now another incident occurred to emphasize his lonely condition, and to cause him to feel more "out in the cold" than ever. It has been said that lord Vennor, since the adjustment of their financial relations, had become a constant visitor at Gow's apartments. On the occasion of several of these visits, he had met both Dunbar and Dillon, and had come to be on terms of intimacy with both of them. As one thing leads to another in such relationships, he had been asked to visit at the houses of both of these men; and had done so. At Dunbar's house he had met Mary Dunbar, and had taken a violent fancy to her from the start. The liking, it turned out, was mutual; and, there being no real obstacle in the way, the mutual liking soon developed into mutual love, and lord Vennor made a formal offer of his hand to Mary Dunbar. He was not rich; but he was of a lovable disposition, handsome, young, and, very much in love. As Dunbar and Dillon were enthusiastic over the match, and were both of them not only willing but anxious to make up any deficiency in the matter of marriage settlements, the match was soon arranged, the marriage took place with due solemnity; and Mary Dunbar became the countess of Vennor.

The wedding had taken place at St. George's, Hanover Square; and, with the greatest difficulty, both Gow and his

wife had been induced to be present at it. As luck would have it, in leaving the church after the ceremony they had met again upon the porch of the church, as they had done some seven years ago. Situated as they were, this was precisely the thing they had both probably desired to avoid; but fate had ordained it differently. As neither sir Sidney nor his wife were moral cowards, they neither of them showed the slightest disposition to run away from the encounter, now it had taken place; but, on the contrary, both appeared to brace themselves for meeting a disagreeable situation with as little show of feeling as possible.

"Time has dealt kindly with you, I am glad to see, sir Sidney," Kate said, in a voice and manner perfectly successful in concealing her true feeling, whatever it might have been.

"I thank your ladyship for your kind expression," said Gow, raising his hat most deferentially, "but time has utterly failed to do for me the only kindly thing it could do; and that is obliterate certain memories of the past."

As lady Gow's carriage now drove up, it released both of them from an embarrassing position for her to immediately enter it and be driven rapidly away; but, it had this disadvantage, namely, that it offered no opportunity for Gow to explain just what the memories were to which he had alluded. We will assume they were those of his own shortcomings. At any rate, the poor fellow was left again standing on the porch of the church, as he had been before; having somewhat bitterly declined to be present at the wedding breakfast, or to take any further part in the festivities whatever. As he had done on a previous occasion, he waited for the last carriage to drive away. It seemed now to accord with his savage and despondent mood to spare himself none of the bitterness of his isolation. He hugged his sorrow to his heart, getting a strange pleasure, doubtless, out of it; as often happens in such instances. He at

last sauntered away in the direction of his hotel, where he spent the rest of the day entirely alone, brooding over his loneliness; a bitter and disappointed man.

And now, lord Vennor having other matters to look after, seldom came to see him; and poor Gow was lonelier and more despondent than ever. There were now four happy homes, Dunbar's, Dillon's, lord Vennor's and his own, from which he was excluded; or, as to three of which, at least, he chose to consider himself excluded. His savage and unhappy mood appeared to grow upon him; as such moods have a way of doing. At times he could hardly contain himself; and he felt he must go mad. At others, he pitied himself intensely, and assumed an attitude of sullen martyrdom. Dunbar and Dillon still continued to visit him, but they frequently found him in such a condition of mind as to render their visits rather perfunctory than otherwise; and gradually began to discontinue them. Although well knowing himself to be responsible for this, he was unreasonable enough to grumble at it; and to add their apparent defection to his already long list of grievances.

One evening he was sitting alone in one of his moody fits, when a sudden impulse came over him to take one of his melancholy and lonely walks to Wandsworth, in the hope of seeing his wife's shadow on the closed window shades of his home. A light fog hung over the town as he set forth on his walk, but the winter was now verging into spring and the heavy fogs had taken their departure for the season. He struck out at a brisk pace as the hour was getting late, and he feared to miss the pleasure, if pleasure it could be called, of finding a light in the window of his wife's apartment if he tarried on the way. He reached Eversfield Road in due time, and was rather surprised to find neither the windows in the lower or the upper story lighted. He looked at his watch by the light

of the street lamp and found it to be only a little past nine o'clock; moreover, he noticed that the windows of the rear of the house were still lighted up, thus affording evidence of the fact that the servants had not retired for the night. Evidently his wife was spending the evening with her friends or relations, as she sometimes did, and might be returning at any moment. Not wishing her to find him in the humiliating position of walking up and down in front of his own house from which he was prevented from entering in deference to her own wishes, Gow determined to return at once to his hotel, and to give up his adventure for the evening. With this object in view, he turned his face towards London and was proceeding along his way with a slow and melancholy stride, in keeping with his thoughts, when, upon reaching the end of Eversfield Road and coming to the common, he became conscious of footsteps behind him. It was a lonely spot and no street lamps were in view, so it was impossible to distinguish what manner of person was following him. He went on for a while, feeling a little apprehensive, but considering it the part of wisdom to show no signs of fear, when he suddenly heard the person, whoever it was, quicken his steps; and in a moment he had received a blow upon the back of his head from a bludgeon in the hands of a strong man which felled him senseless to the ground.

Out of a delirious dream, he gradually awoke to consciousness. He found himself to his intense surprise in a luxuriously furnished bedroom, and in a particularly comfortable bed. Nothing in the apartment was familiar to him. To be sure, his memory of past events had not yet fully returned with the consciousness of his present surroundings. He was certain he was in a room and in a bed he had never been in before; and that was about as far as he could get. As his sensibilities became more acute, he thought he heard the sounds of low voices in an adjoining

room through a partly opened door. The voices were evidently those of women. One said: "It was a most fortunate thing I found him just as I did, for, if left to himself, I feel sure he would never have lived through the night. It was by the merest chance in the world, however, that we saw him. I was returning in a cab from an evening in Portland Place, when the horse shied at something lying by the side of the road; which, naturally enough, caught the attention of the driver. By the light of his cab lamp he saw the figure of a man evidently dead or insensible. He got down from his seat and finding a gentleman badly injured by a blow upon his head, told me of it; and between us we were able to lift him into the cab and bring him here."

"And how long ago did this all happen?" asked the other voice.

"Three days."

"And has he been unconscious all this time?"

"Yes, and may remain so for some days longer; the doctor says."

"But he feels confident of his recovery?"

"Yes, with care and entire absence of excitement; but he was dangerously injured. Concussion of the brain. Here the voices ceased, and a light footstep announced the approach of one of the women. Gow feigned unconsciousness; but with one eye partly open caught a glimpse of a trained nurse in the peculiar costume of her service. As the day passed on he spent his time, intervals between fits of semi-consciousness or sleep and lucid periods, in a vain speculation as to where he was; and as to the identity of the other woman. Partly from sheer weakness and physical apathy, and partly from a feeling of perfect security and comfort which seemed to pervade his senses, he refrained from asking any questions, or of in any way giving evidence of his return to consciousness. "All in

good time," he said to himself. "It's a pleasant adventure, just as it stands; so let it go at that."

The nurse busied herself about the room, occasionally coming to her patient's bedside and smoothing his pillow, giving him medicine, looking to the bandages about his head, and performing all the other little offices incident to her profession. Gow allowed himself to be waited upon with all the delight of a man who for a long time had been unfamiliar with feminine attentions of any kind. Then the doctor came; and he overheard a long whispered conversation between him and the two women through the open door, as before. From this he learned that he had had a very narrow escape from death; and was still by no means out of danger. The least sudden excitement might bring on a recurrence of the unfavorable symptoms, and all would be over with poor Gow. So, the day passed, and the night succeeding it, and the next day came, and the patient began to feel so much better than he was supposed to be, that he set himself to considering the practicability of finding out where he was, and a few other things that puzzled him. With this object in view he opened his eyes and asked in a weak voice, "Nurse, where am I?"

Her answer was to place her finger on her lips in a manner to indicate silence, and then said: "Excuse me, sir, but doctor's orders are for me to allow no talking whatever for a few days yet, and to answer no questions."

"But, I'm so much better. You really might tell me where I am."

"I'm glad you're better, sir; but I really can't tell you anything at present. Try to get some sleep, and don't excite yourself. You've been very ill, and are far from well yet. You really must be quiet."

All this was said in the kindly but authoritative manner of one perfectly accustomed to a sick room and to implicit obedience to her doctor's orders. Gow, finding it difficult

to proceed any further just yet upon the line of investigation he had taken up, lapsed again into the listless, luxurious feeling of perfect irresponsibility which characterizes a really sick person; and spent his time in pleasurable expectation as to what turn his adventure would ultimately take. And so matters went on for some days; until in fact, the doctor relieved the embargo he had placed upon the patient's talking and permitted even himself to be questioned.

"Where am I. Doctor?" asked Gow.

"That's a perfectly natural question for you to ask, my dear sir; but, unfortunately, there are two reasons why I can't answer it."

"Are you at liberty to state your reasons?"

"Oh, yes; the first one is you are not strong enough to withstand any excitement. The second, I've promised not to answer it."

"Your reasons appear to be good ones, doctor"; said Gow, smiling, "But don't you think the excitement of a *refusal* to gratify a sick man's whim may be quite as serious as gratifying it?"

"Possibly; but then I fall back upon my second reason, my promise, you know; which is sacred."

"Very well, doctor; but I warn you that the effect of suppressed curiosity on a nature like mine becomes cumulative in time and will soon begin to react badly upon me. Barring my weakness, I am as fit as I ever was in my life; but I shall certainly have a relapse if I am to be kept in this state of ungratified curiosity much longer."

"I'll see what can be done"; said the doctor, kindly, and as this was all that could be got out of him, the matter was allowed to drop.

With returning health and strength, however, and after long nights of peaceful and undisturbed sleep, Gow soon found himself both mentally and physically in a condition

where it would have been absurd to treat him as a really sick man any longer. Realizing this, he made up his mind to rebel against the discipline he had been subjected to; when, upon awakening from a profound sleep one morning, he was surprised to find a distinct change in his surroundings. In the first place, the nurse failed to respond to his summons, as she had been in the habit of doing, when he asked for his breakfast. This was strange; but it was not all. The room had been cleaned and garnished, the furniture moved about in different positions to the ones he had seen it in. It appeared to him as if the whole atmosphere, moral and physical, of the place had changed, and a new regime had been inaugurated. Instead of the nurse being on hand to wait upon his wish, whatever it was, before he even formulated it in his own mind, there was a little night table near his bed with a bell upon it, and on a piece of paper under the bell were written the words, "Please ring when you want your breakfast."

He took the bell and rang it. In due time a servant he had never seen before entered the room with a tray upon which was his breakfast. She set it down upon the table, helped Gow to get himself into a comfortable position to eat it, then opened the curtains to let in the light of day; a thing which had not been done since Gow had been in the place, and, as she was about to go, said: "My mistress sends her compliments, and wishes to know whether you would care to see her?"

"Tell your mistress I shall be delighted to see her at once; if entirely convenient."

"Yes sir," replied he maid, as she left the room.

In a few moments the door opened and Kate entered. Although the possibility of his being in his own house had entered his mind, Gow was hardly prepared for so unexpected an appearance upon the part of his wife. A sudden fullness and oppression in his head overcame him, and he

fell back upon his pillow in a fainting fit. However calmly Kate had intended to undergo the trying ordeal of meeting her husband, under the peculiar circumstances which surrounded them, the effect they had produced upon her husband disconcerted all her plans. She rushed to his bedside, and with every evidence, not only of intense anxiety, but of intense affection, ministered to him. As soon as the pressure upon the brain seemed to be somewhat relieved, Kate became calm again; and quietly seating herself near her husband's bed, waited for him to fully recover himself before attempting to speak to him.

"Are you feeling better, my dear?" she asked, after a pause in which each had been evidently hoping for the other to break the silence.

"Yes, Kate; thanks to your excellent care, I'm quite myself again. But I fear I must have been a great burden and trouble to you, dear child, all these long days and nights of unconsciousness. How good you have been."

And here the tears of weakness and pent up excitement came to the sick man's eyes, which he dashed away with an impatient gesture; but which were a thousand times more eloquent than any words. A pause ensued in which both were undoubtedly going over the memories of the past in their minds. Then Gow went on: "I little thought of meeting you under conditions like these, dear Kate. You have indeed heaped coals of fire upon my head."

He was going to ask her how it all had happened; but it occurred to him that in the first place he had already heard her tell the story of having found him unconscious in the street, and, second, that in dwelling upon the subject he would inevitably have to explain his own presence in that part of the town. So he changed the subject.

"I shall be well enough to be up and about again soon, I hope, Kate; and then I promise to take myself off your

hands. I am a little weak to be moved yet, I fear; so perhaps you will let me remain a little longer."

"Yes, my dear; as long as you like."

"Kate?"

"Yes?"

"Kate, before I go, may I hope for a full forgiveness from you for all the wrong I have ever done you? I have had it on my heart to ask you this ever since I left you at the church door some seven years ago. Kate, I treated you abominably, shamefully. I acted the part of a villain and a cad. But I have had a long, lonely time in which to think it all over; Kate. I have had time in which to bitterly, bitterly repent; and in which to learn to respect and to love you. As I lie here upon what would have been my death-bed but for your tender care of me, I realize more than ever my wickedness in the past and the magnitude of my loss. I think, Kate, of what your love might have been to the man who had known how to keep and to cherish such a treasure. I was a fool, and blind, Kate; and I well deserve my punishment. But think of me kindly in the future, my dear; as I shall always think of you; lovingly, regretfully and hopelessly. I know your make-up, Kate; it is hard for you to forgive; and you have *much* to forgive. But try, Kate. I shall never trouble you, as you told me not to do when we parted at the church door; but I should like to feel that I was forgiven; as I forgive the man who struck me down and intended to kill me. I know who it was; but I shall never try to have him punished. He unintentionally did me the greatest service in the world. He gave me this chance to speak to you once again, dear child; and to beg and implore your forgiveness. Tell me that you forgive me, Kate."

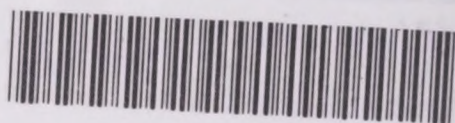
The effort and excitement of this rambling speech was too much for the wounded man; and he fell back again into a prolonged swoon.

When he recovered consciousness, he found his wife holding him in her arms and covering his face with tears and kisses.

“Let us each forgive and forget, dear love”; she said, “and may God forbid that we ever part again until He calls us home!”

THE END.

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